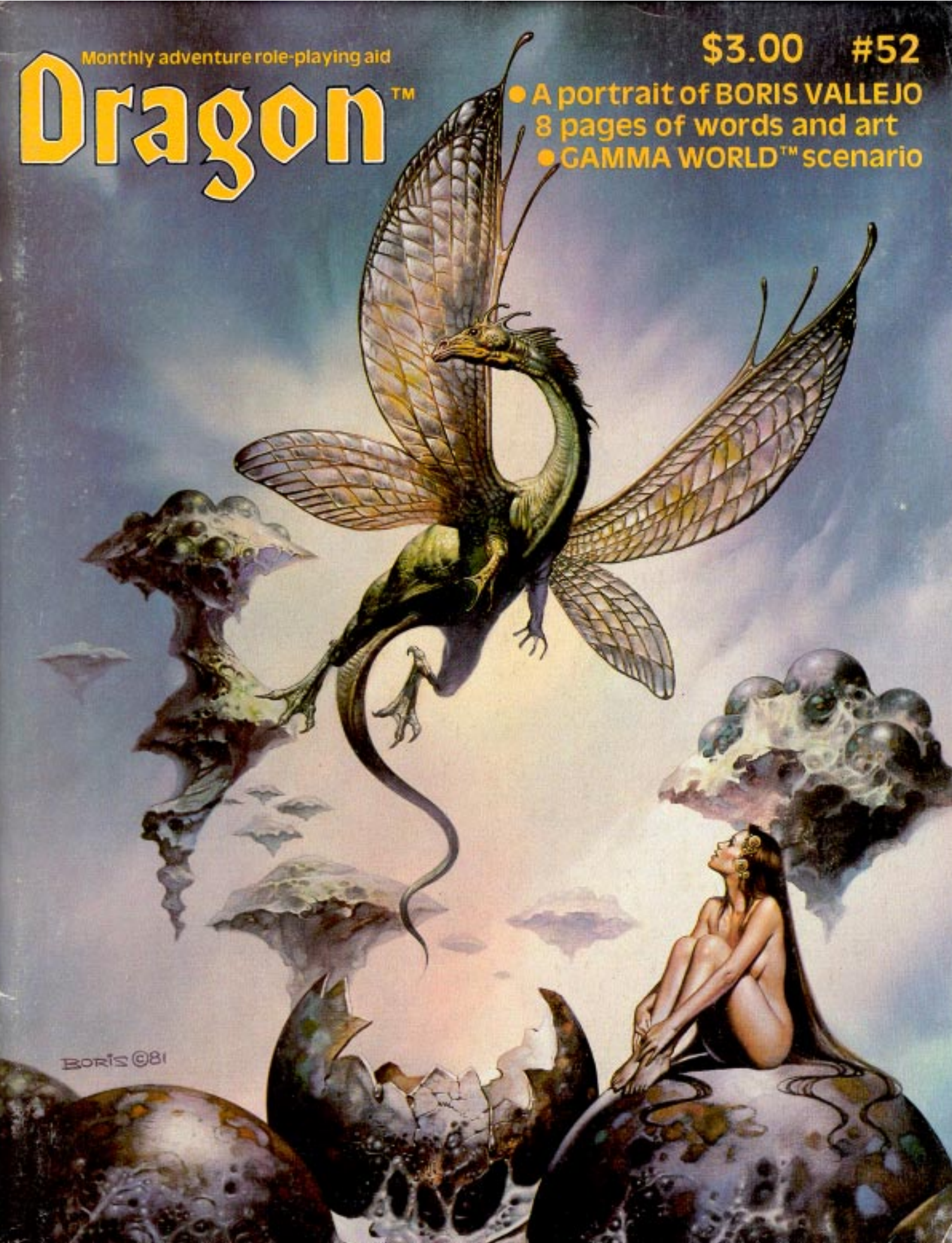


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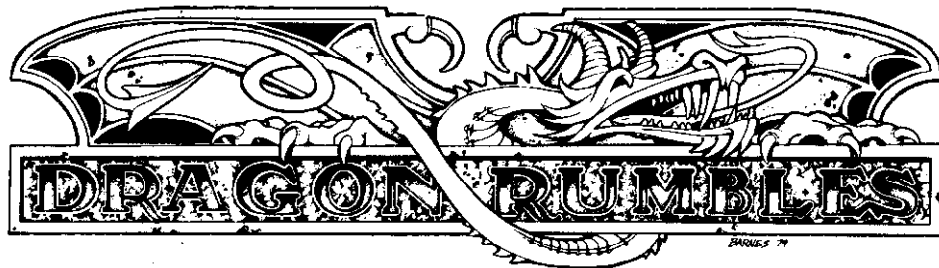
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In somebody's dictionary, a cliché should exist about dragons — something on the order of . . . *You seen one dragon, you seen 'em all* . . . no, that's not it . . . *A dragon in the hand is worth* . . . no, how 'bout . . . *There are as many different types of dragons as there are people to think them up.*

Hmmm. A little rough, but it'll do.

Ahem. If you've been paying attention to the cover of this magazine lately, you've probably noticed a lot of dragons — and we don't mean the word on top by the price.

Three of our last four covers have featured our mythical namesake, or at least the visions of three prominent artists as to what a dragon is supposed to look like.

First there was Tim Hildebrandt's vision (issue #49) — an impressive fire-breather laying waste to a moonlit castle. Gracing the cover of #50 was Carl Lundgren's vision: just the opposite — a mysterious beastie, shrouded by the darkness of his lair.

Tough acts to follow, admittedly. Not too many artists working today could do it, but this issue's cover certainly doesn't pale by comparison. After all, it *is* a Boris.

"I wanted to do something different," Boris said after completing an oil painting that further demonstrates that there are as many different types of dragons as there are people to think them up.

Hence, the idea of hatching dragons. Ditto the delicate wings on his beast.

Created in the fine brush strokes that mark Boris' increasingly realistic style, the work — which is untitled — demonstrates several of the artist's trademarks. There is, of course, his love of the human form, as represented the beautiful woman who has graced many of his paintings. And the dragon looks . . . *right* — like it really existed, a testimony to Boris' pre-medical studies in anatomy.

Note also the depth of field — or focus — on the dragon, for example, that gives the painting a three-dimensional quality, and the egg nodules floating in the background which he said "emphasizes the fantasy element."

Typical also is the speed with which the 40-year-old New Yorker painted the piece: four days from start to signature. Better yet, he said, after overcoming the initial "artist's block" he feels when facing a blank canvas, "it was fun."

A word of explanation about the interview with the artist that begins on page 28: That three-letter word is a topic of discussion, and Boris is a frank man who doesn't mind stating his opinions. A few words relating to the human body that probably haven't appeared on these pages before are included in that context — but there's nothing — repeat, NOTHING — about that part of the interview that we feel is anything but an honest discussion of something we shouldn't get so upset about, anyway.

Enough of reality; back to fantasy.

Obviously, we haven't begun to exhaust the possibilities for artistic expressions about dragons. More renditions will appear here, and for those of you who can't get enough of the noble monster, look for the 1982 DAYS OF THE DRAGON™ Fantasy Art Calendar. We'll be featuring dragons — 13 of 'em at last count — using the AD&D™ Monster Manual and past issues of DRAGON™ magazine as inspiration. If you're at the GEN CON® XIV Convention this month, stop by the Dragon Publishing booth and take a look.

Our apologies to all of you who were so impressed with the description of *The Beholder* in "The 'Zines" (issue #50) that you sent money to England for a subscription. We don't know exactly what the situation is, but we *do* know that the magazine is no longer being published by Michael Stoner, like the article indicated. We received an urgently worded cable giving us that information from Don Turnbull, managing director of TSR Hobbies (UK) Limited, a few weeks ago, but just too late to allow us to get the correction into issue #51. "Don't send money to Stoner," says Don, and we (now that we know better) echo that recommendation. Once again, our sincere apologies and regrets for any inconvenience or loss of money that the misinformation caused. We have reports that *The Beholder* is still going to be published, somehow, by somebody, but our two sources of information are in conflict. We'll try to unravel the mystery and give you the true facts next time around.

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**H**rom Boris to Bounty Hunters, from Greyhawk to Gamma World, from clerics to conventions: This issue of DRAGON™ magazine contains articles and artwork that range far and wide across the vast spectrum of fantasy and fantasy game-playing.

Like the lettering on the cover proudly proclaims, the fanciest feature you'll find inside is an eight-page interview with Boris Vallejo, one of the best fantasy artists to ever lift a brush. For proof of that, one need look no further than the scintillating cover painting Boris created especially for DRAGON magazine — but if you need more convincing, turn to page 28 and savor the interview (conducted by staff member Bryce Knorr) and the accompanying photographs and paintings which illustrate it.

All of you who've been clamoring for a GAMMA WORLD™ adventure to appear on these pages can put away those laser pistols. *Cavern of the Sub-Train* is the creation of Jake Jaquet, our esteemed publisher and the co-author of the GAMMA WORLD rules.

This issue's NPC offering is a three-for-one deal: We got so many Bounty Hunter submissions after making a request for just such a character class that we decided to give you a trio of tough guys to choose from.

The first few pages of the article section will answer the prayers of clerics everywhere. Robert Plamondon's long general article on "The Role of the Cleric" is supplemented by a pair of shorter variants from Douglas Loss, plus 2½ pages of Sage Advice questions and answers all about clerics.

For some insight into how and why the D&D® Basic Set was created and how it evolved into the game it is today, check out the observations and opinions of the two people — J. Eric Holmes and Tom Moldvay — who served as editors for the first and the second edition, respectively.

The offering for TOP SECRET™ players this month is Paul Crabaugh's discussion of undercover occupations. Historical

specialist Michael Kluever is back with a contribution entitled "Knock, Knock" (as in, let me in or I'll batter your door down), an overview of siege warfare tactics and strategy through the ages.

The first major addition to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy World Setting that we've published comes from the typewriter of Len Lakofka and is presented in Len's regular column, *Leomund's Tiny Hut*. The article gives guidelines for determining the place of birth and the languages known by inhabitants of the Flanaess — plus an appendix by E. Gary Gygax himself which describes the appearances of the races that inhabit this famous land.

The latest edition of *Giants in the Earth* presents Katharine Kerr's interpretations of two "island enchanters" — Prospero, from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and the legendary Circe, in a portrayal which is drastically different from the description of her in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopaedia.

In *Simulation Corner*, John Prados gives us the first installment of a series on the essentials of game design. More advice, of a different sort, can be found in *Up on a Soapbox*, where Lew Pulsipher tells DMs how to make up for their mistakes and Tom Armstrong suggests how to get around the problem of the "know-it-all" player.

Our review section is larger in size and in scope this time around, with the addition of "Off the Shelf," the first course of what we plan to be a regular diet of book reviews by Chris Henderson. Immediately preceding the book section are three game and game-accessory reviews, and just in front of them is another two pages' worth of miniature-figure evaluations in *Figuratively Speaking*.

Rounding out the reading material inside is another chapter in the *Minarian Legends* saga by Glenn Rahman, designer of the DIVINE RIGHT™ Fantasy Boardgame which first made the continent of Minaria famous, and a page crammed full of notices of upcoming conventions around the country and across the sea.

After putting together a string of four straight appearances, Finieous Fingers didn't make it to number five, but J. D. has promised to continue the story of everybody's favorite thief in time for publication next month. Hold on, Finieous fans, and in the meantime we hope your funnybones are sufficiently tickled by a page of *Dragon Mirth* cartoons, plus another "What's New?" from Phil Foglio and the latest page from Tramp depicting the whimsical and wierd world of Wormy. Is the world ready for a one-eyed bloodhound? Ready or not, here it comes! — KM

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Cover painting ©1981 by Boris Vallejo



## 'Useless'

Dear Editor:

I think DRAGON is an excellent magazine, and normally I would be willing to praise it, but issue #49 was more or less useless. "Best Wishes" was helpful, and I enjoyed the TOP SECRET and Alchemist material, but that's all. I was very disappointed to find a story on an artist in the center instead of the usual module or game.

Issue #50 was better, being mostly about dragons, which I use often. The only problem with this issue was that it was *all* D&D. I play D&D often, and it is my favorite game, but I also play TOP SECRET, GAMMA WORLD, and BOOT HILL. How about putting more of these in? I have been reading DRAGON since #44, and I have not seen any GAMMA WORLD articles. Combine #50 with a TOP SECRET article and maybe a GAMMA WORLD module, and you would have a fantastic magazine.

Ty Treadwell  
Marietta, Ga.

## 'Overboard'

Dear Editor:

I was extremely disappointed with issue #49 of DRAGON. What happened to all the great gaming suggestions, variants, and aids that we have come to expect from DRAGON? I don't claim to have such creativity, and I have come to rely on your magazine for new ideas and information to spur my imagination and enhance my campaign. I think you went overboard on the convention scene. Your small, one- or two-page schedules had long been suitable for informing gamers of upcoming events. I'd hate to see DRAGON turn into a convention schedule.

As a role-playing aid, the magazine ranked low. I believe that people want informative articles about gaming, not portraits of artists. My apologies to Tim Hildebrandt. I am very pleased with his work, but knowing his life story enlightened me in no way. Another symbol of deterioration was the fact that *Sage Advice* was missing altogether. I hope that this issue is not an example of how DRAGON will be in the future.

But if it's any consolation, that was only one bad magazine out of 49.

Don Corman  
Chelmsford, Mass.

*We don't enjoy getting letters from readers who are critical of a certain issue's content, but we accept negative criticism as inevitable — especially when we try to break new ground*

*with a feature such as the Hildebrandt interview.*

*As fantasy becomes more and more popular, the people who create works of fantasy (literature and art) become personalities. They get attention from the general public, instead of just from a small core of fantasy enthusiasts. It may indeed be stretching the point to call an interview with an artist a "role-playing aid," but even if such an article doesn't quite fit into the definition of what DRAGON is about, we think it still has an application and can serve as an inspiration to fantasy gamers and budding artists who want an inside look into how a creative genius does his creating.*

*If you didn't like the interview in #49, you're not gonna be too crazy about what you find inside this magazine, either. But — just like we reasoned when we published the Hildebrandt interview — we think the majority of our readers will enjoy the words and pictures of Boris Vallejo for the insight they provide in to one of the people who has helped broaden the appeal of fantasy.*

*No matter how anyone else may feel about the Boris feature, we're pretty sure that the writer of this next letter will appreciate it:*

## 'Great!'

Dear editor:

The Tim Hildebrandt interview in DRAGON #49 was great! Would it be possible to have interviews with other artists such as Boris Vallejo or Frank Frazetta?

Christopher Diedoardo  
New York, N.Y.

*It sure would be possible, Chris. You really know how to make an editor happy... — KM*

## 'High level'

Gentlemen:

Enough is enough! I have heard enough "preaching" against high-level characters in the past few issues to turn the gods of Lankmar loose in the editing offices of DRAGON. Since you let people speak against high-level characters, I think we high-level characters should get a few words in, and boy, do we have some gripes!

I have read several articles on how and why DMs should get rid of high-level characters, and nothing burns me up worse. What do we play for? According to DRAGON, every time a character gets over 14th level he should be turned into cinders at the base of some altar, have every assassin in the world after him, or

should be sitting in his castle, twiddling his thumbs, somewhere in the middle of West Nowhere.

Secondly, any seventh-level character that thinks he can outswap stories with me has had one too many feeblemind spells cast on him! All of this that I hear about high-level characters being "given" levels really makes my half-elven blood boil. I had to work extremely hard and spend a lot of hours to get my characters where they are. Nobody can tell me that I haven't earned every experience point I ever got.

It has been said on numerous occasions by various people that gods can't be integrated into the AD&D scene with any degree of success or realism. To this I politely answer, "Garn." The Greek heroes had quite a few encounters with their gods, and there seems to be no lack of Greek mythology books even today. In my opinion, the DM who can't creatively and realistically use a divine being in his/her campaign has no imagination. Does it seem so unlikely that a god would have some mortals as his chosen champions? In our world we have quite a bit of association with the gods (pleasant and unpleasant) and have had several successful encounters with divine beings in our gods' names. It works in our world and still seems very realistic, so I don't see why it couldn't work in someone else's.

Divine creatures and extra-powerful monsters can make AD&D interesting even for high-level characters. What's wrong with having to fight five huge ancient red dragons with maximum hit points and spell-using ability? How about complex traps and difficult situations? Or, is it so impossible to go to Jotunheim and do some damage to Thrym and his brothers? Not with imagination. And isn't that what this game is based on?

I would like to end on a happier note. You guys really do a good job on DRAGON, but maybe you need a few counterpoints to go along with your points.

Charlie Luna  
Athens, Tex.

## 'Enough NPCs'

Dear Editor:

I have had enough of your NPCs! Sure, they help you and balance the game, but on the other hand they can ruin you.

The character is the main flow of the game. Everything focuses around him. I keep seeing new toys for the DM. Why not help us players a bit, too?

Michael S. Pacyna  
Bowling Green, Ky.



The forest, now in shadow, would soon be black with night. The wanderer, weary from her plight, anxiously searched for a resting ground, unaware that the "CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT" lurked nearby. The unexplained screams of doom and dread came upon her, without warning. The terror of the night was unfolding . . .

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The "Children of the Night" have been turned loose on the world. They're lurking at your local adventure gaming store.

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# THE ROLE OF THE CLERIC

## WARRIORS WITH WISDOM

by Robert Plamondon

*Then to their side comes the Archbishop Turpin,  
Riding his horse and up the hillside spurring.  
He calls to the French and preaches them a sermon:  
"Barons; my lords, Charles picked us for this purpose;  
We must be ready to die in our King's service.  
Christendom needs you, so help us to preserve it.  
Battle you'll have, of this you may be certain,  
Here come the Paynims — your own eyes have observed them.  
Now beat your breasts and ask God for His mercy:  
I will absolve you and set your souls in surety.  
If you should die, blest martyrdom's your guerdon;  
You'll sit on high in Paradise eternal."  
The French alight and all kneel down in worship;  
God's shrift and blessing the Archbishop conferreth,  
And for their penance he bids them all strike firmly.*

— The Song of Roland, Laisse 89

Legendary heroes such as Archbishop Turpin are undoubtedly the inspiration of the cleric character class in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ games. Turpin was not a meek temple priest, but a warrior and adventurer whose skill at arms was matched only by his devotion to his God.

But author's inspiration is not necessarily player's inspiration, especially when rulebooks reduce character classes to dessicated statistics, and along the way they lose their romantic flavor.

Because Carolingian works such as *The Song of Roland* are no longer well known, most players are unaware of any legend of heroic priests. With no traditional role to fall back upon, the cleric all too often becomes a specialized mage, who murmurs prayers instead of reading tomes, or a combat medic running from patient to patient. Religion, the gods, the role of preacher



and protector, are all forgotten; many players have cleric characters who don't even know which god they serve. All of this contributes to the fact that the cleric is one of the most frequently misplayed character classes.

This piece was written to address this problem by suggesting the proper role of the cleric-adventurer in a medieval fantasy setting.

### The role of the gods

No discussion of clerics makes much sense if the role of the gods is not examined. The powers of a cleric are bestowed upon him by his patron god.

Why would a god waste time giving spells to a cleric? Why do gods bother dealing with mortals at all? Why would the gods encourage mortals to pray and sacrifice to them?

Power, that's why. Each act of worship provides the god with a little bit of power. This is what separates the divine from the mortal. If a god wants to stay alive, he must have worshipers.

A god might have many more worshipers than are necessary to keep him alive. The extra power can be used in several ways: First, it can be used by the god to increase his personal strength. The major difference between a demigod and a greater god is that the greater god is consuming great quantities of power. This enhances his magical powers, makes him harder to kill, and builds strong bodies twelve ways.

To keep his worshipers faithful, some of the power is returned in the form of spells and miracles given to benefit or punish his followers. When a god puts on a good show, his believers will worship him more (out of hope or fear), thus paying him back with interest.

This suggests that a lot of games theory can be used by the god in deciding how to maximize his overall power. Should he plow back his power into spells, miracles, and lesser divine beings; or keep as much as possible to himself? The former increases his worldly power at the expense of his personal power; the latter increases his personal power, but weakens his worldly following. The one thing that's certain is that a god won't waste power if he can help it; he won't grant miracles to just anyone who asks, or grant spells to clerics who aren't doing their jobs.

Power depends on several variables: The number of people worshiping, the frequency of worship, and the fervor of the worship. A person who sits bored and sleepy through an occasional church service generates almost no power; a fanatic embracing martyrdom generates a great deal. Below are some acts of worship, in order of increasing power:

1. Thinking religious thoughts.
2. Formal prayer.
3. Attending rites or church services.
4. Feasts, festivals, fasts, self-punishment, vigils- as part of religious rites.
5. Sacrifice of valuables.
6. Dying in a holy conflict.
7. Killing an enemy in a holy conflict.
8. Sacrifice of an unbeliever.
9. Sacrifice of an unwilling believer.
10. Sacrifice of a willing believer.

These are only approximate. For example, a high priest who embraces martyrdom usually generates more power than a ritual human sacrifice — so much more so that members of an opposing religion will refuse to sacrifice captured priests; the captors' god would come out behind in the transfer of power.

When on the Prime Material Plane, power transfer both to and from a god is most efficient when the god is near his worshipers. This explains why most gods have such a strictly regional appeal; if a god travels away from his following, his power quickly drops to some lower level, and his clerics are affected in the same way. This keeps the mischief of divine beings in check,

since long visits to the wrong parts of the Prime Material Plane can make them easy pickings for local gods.

This is also one reason why lesser demons and devils are so unthinkingly violent. On the Prime Material, they are far removed from the great evil beings who normally give them power, and are incapable of assembling a group of worshipers. If they are to remain on the Prime Material Plane, they must kill worshipers of other deities, feeding on the power of the murders, or go dormant.

In any event, the gods need worship, and they're willing to pay to get it. The chief beneficiaries of this arrangement are the clerics, whose role is now examined.

### Clerics, gods, and worshipers

Clerics are devoted to preserving and enhancing the power of their gods. This is done in several ways, listed below.

The cleric, by his devotion and constant prayer, is himself a source of power. First- and second-level spells are powered by the cleric's devotion alone; the god expends no energy on granting these spells to a truly devout cleric — and there isn't any other *kind* of cleric; when the devotion goes, so do all of the abilities.

By gaining converts to his religion, the cleric gains new worshipers for his god and deprives another god of their devotion.

Clerics build and maintain holy places, which are strongholds of the Faith, and can be places of great spiritual power; miracles are most likely to be granted on sacred ground.

Clerics tend their flocks, keeping the worshipers happy and devout, or fearful and devout, depending on the god. They encourage worship by healing the faithful, giving comfort, and by sponsoring feasts, festivals, and celebrations.

Clerics filibuster against other religions by bad-mouthing them, persecuting their adherents, defiling enemies holy places, destroying monsters, and subjugating nations of unbelievers. To do this last thing, the clerics have to have some control over the nations' rulers — but with the aid of a god, this isn't usually a problem.

Clerics also work at self-improvement. They try to educate themselves and to become more devout, so that they can be of greater use to their god.

All of this takes a great deal of work and dedication, though most clerics are not obsessed with fulfilling each possible task. Some tend temples, some preach to the masses, some go out to slay evil monsters. In some way, every cleric gives a lot to his god. To make the deal attractive, the god reciprocates.

Clerics get spells. The idea of being a spell-caster is very attractive, and all it takes to get first-level spells is a strong faith — which can be easy to maintain in a world where gods put in public appearances.

Clerics get power: power over the undead, the power of magic, prestige, and influence. They have the prospect of becoming more powerful after they die, since gods use the spirits and souls of their best worshipers for important work.

Clerics get security, usually. They generally take care of their own, and no cleric need fear disease or mutilation when there are healing spells available. The church protects them from other types of harm; few people are willing to risk a divine curse to rob a priest.

Clerics get satisfaction. They get benefits from their work; when they do well, they get more power. They know that what they do aids their god, and they know that their god looks out for the priesthood as a whole, and maybe even as individuals.

Most clerics spend their careers tending a holy place, preaching, dispensing aid and receiving offerings. Although this kind of priest leads a rewarding life, and is often quite powerful, the role is not adventurous enough for a role-playing game. The cleric player character is a special kind of priest, one who is more interested in smiting enemies and improving 'himself' for his god than he is in keeping a temple. Therefore, we'll leave the temple priest to his rites and concentrate on the fighting priest.

## The cleric-adventurer

*Archbishop Turpin goes riding through the field;  
Ne'er was mass sung by any tonsured priest  
That of his body could do such valiant deeds!  
He hails the Paynim: "God send the worst to thee!  
Thou hast slain one for whom my whole heart grieves."  
Into a gallop he urges his good steed,  
He strikes him hard on his Toledo shield,  
And lays him dead upon the grassy green.*

— The Song of Roland, Laisse 121

The cleric-adventurer is not a meek priest; he is a warrior who has spells and magical powers to aid him as he destroys the enemies of his god. Like Archbishop Turpin, he can use his powers to bless and support his comrades, and he is an able fighter in his own right, second only to a professional warrior in skill.

Players with cleric characters usually recognize the useful-

ness of the spells and armor that clerics have available. They don't generally understand the full price their characters must pay for these advantages.

The cleric-adventurer is getting spells from his god. Why? Because the cleric is doing his god's work. Gods are simply not going to waste power on a backslider. At best, they'll simply withhold all spells until the errant cleric shapes up, and then only grant them in proportion to the amount and intensity of the cleric's work.

The cleric has to be devout, and he has to be alert to the needs of his faith. This is the point most often missed by players. The instant a cleric stops thinking like a cleric, he isn't a cleric any more, until appropriate spells, acts of contrition, and/or sacrifices are completed.

Another source of player confusion is the role of clerics in the adventure. Are they supposed to be primarily mages, fighters, or medics? Many, by watching clerics in battle, have concluded that they are medics. Others insist that they are specialty mages, who use prayer as a substitute for spell books.

## THIS LAND IS MY LAND...

by Douglas Loss

In many traditional fantasies, and as played in D&D® and AD&D™ games, clerics receive the blessing, protection, and tutelage of a particular god. It's from this god that the cleric's power and majesty comes.

Additionally, each god has a certain geographical area where the populace reveres it over all others. These areas are looked upon favorably by their patron gods, who use their powers to protect them from the ravages of other deities.

The clerics are the messengers of the gods, their interpreters in the everyday affairs of the populace, and instructors of the populace in the ways of worship. The large majority of clerics fill these roles.

However, some clerics are wanderers, in the style of some medieval Christian and present-day Hindu orders. These clerics have not necessarily taken vows of poverty, but any wealth they gain will generally go to the furtherance of their religions.

The reasons for clerical wandering involve the gods that the clerics worship. The gods may send them to gain new converts, to accomplish other godly desires, or to gain perspective and insight into the ways of the world. Or for any of hundreds of unknown reasons. Who can answer for the gods?

The wisdom of a cleric represents his potential ability to gain the above mentioned perspective and insight. The wisest of clerics are recognized by their gods as of more use in instructing others and generally causing the gods' names to be glorified even more. The attribute of exceptionally high wisdom is usually acknowledged by a god's allowing such a cleric to draw on the god's power more often and more effectively than a less wise one can.

The material components for clerical spells are sacrificial offerings to a god. The verbal and somatic components are the cleansing rituals of the clerical order, which prepare the cleric to be a channel for the god's power.

The act of being a channel for a god's power is very draining. Rest and contemplation are necessary to regain the stamina needed to again act as a channel.

The gods, in their wisdom, don't allow every cleric to know any spell he's potentially capable of learning; a cleric must, through prayer, ask his god to grant him the specific ability to use the god's power in the way that the cleric desires.

How then to put this in AD&D terms? On the matter of patron

gods of geographical areas, we need to prepare two more maps of the campaign area. They should be simple maps, on the order of weather/temperature maps. One will show the relative tendency toward law/neutrality/chaos of any area; the other, the relative good/neutral/evil nature of any area. When cross-indexed, these maps will describe an alignment for each section of the campaign map..

The alignment of an area doesn't mean that every creature in that area is of that alignment; only the deity associated with that alignment is especially concerned with what happens in that area. Gods don't often directly meddle in mortal affairs, anyway.

Clerics operating in areas under the direct patronage of their god will have a very good chance of using the god's power to its utmost. Their spells will be more potent (in duration, power, etc.) than the norm (about 125% of standard figures is reasonable to use).

Clerics operating in areas of "adjacent" alignment (lawful good is adjacent to neutral good and lawful neutral, for example) will have spells of standard potency. The potency of spells will diminish the further the alignment of an area is from the cleric's own alignment. The cleric's power and spell potency are at their weakest in an area of opposite alignment, such as lawful good vs. chaotic evil. (Somewhere between one-fourth and one-half strength would be appropriate.)

The strength and weakness of power and spell potency pertains only to clerics pursuing goals on their own initiative..Any cleric specifically sent by his god on a mission into unfriendly territory might be given a divine token which would create an aura of the cleric's alignment immediately around him, making his spells of standard potency. This is not a frequent occurrence.

For a cleric on a mission for his god, martyrdom is not something to be shied away from. Indeed, the god may demand it: If a *Flame strike* on the person of his loyal follower would accomplish the god's purpose, that certainly should not deter the cleric from "firing" himself. What a glorious end!

Druids are treated differently with regard to areas of power and potency, because they worship nature. Nature has no specific alignment area; druidic spells never vary in potency. Nature isn't a god of any specific alignment, it's more of a balance of alignments in the world. If the balance of nature is tipped too far one way or the other, druids will attempt to restore it. In this way they differ from neutral clerics (which can only exist in the game as non-player characters) who worship a true neutral god.

These views would be correct if the clerics in a typical expedition had been recruited from a downtown temple. The clerics would then have been brought along with the party to minister to wounds, turn undead, and cast a couple of beneficial spells.

But cleric-adventurers aren't enticed from downtown temples, they go adventuring on their own initiative. Cleric-adventurers are trained warriors; they fight better than trained men-at-arms, are comfortable with armor, and are bold enough to enter places no cynical mercenary would dare come near. They are warrior-priests, and it should show in their outlook.

This warlike outlook is evident in a properly motivated cleric player character. Why does a cleric-adventurer go on adventures? Certainly not just to play medic; he could do that where it's safe — people get hurt everywhere. Not just for greed; if he concentrated solely on personal ambition, he'd soon be bereft of spells.

His motives are basically aggressive: he wants to destroy his god's enemies, wrest away their wealth, and accumulate personal experience in a rapid but risky manner; and all for his god's benefit. This is a cleric worthy of Turpin's approval.

After all, how meek can you expect a person who fights terrible monsters to be? Just descending into a dungeon is an act of uncommon boldness. The cleric-adventurer isn't, and really can't be, a meek healer. His purpose demands that he be a bold killer, a champion of his god.

That a cleric-adventurer's motives are aggressive does not insure that his actions will always be. Although the cleric is on the expedition to smite the enemies of the Faith, he is less well equipped to do so by force of arms than a fighter, and much worse at offensive magic than magic-users. Most clerics are temple-keepers and healers, and clerical spells are mostly for their use. The cleric-adventurer is sometimes forced by the (relatively) limited scope of his spells to support his comrades more than fight, but his influence and abilities can help keep his comrades fighting for the right cause. The important thing is that the job gets done, whether or not the cleric strikes the blows himself.

The portrayal of the cleric-adventurer as a crusader for his god makes him sound suspiciously like an AD&D paladin. Granted; but if players had used clerics as something other than combat medics, perhaps the need for the paladin subclass would have never surfaced. Roland was a traditional paladin, and he had no magic powers. Turpin was most accurately a cleric-adventurer, but he reeks of the characteristics of paladinhood.

### Clerics and swords

*Turpin of Rheims, finding himself o'erset,  
With four sharp lance-heads stuck fast within his breast,  
Quickly leaps up, brave lord, and stands erect.  
He looks on Roland and runs to him and says  
Only one word: "I am not beaten yet!  
True man never failed while life was in him left!"  
He draws Almace, his steel-bright brand keen-edged;  
A thousand strokes he strikes into the press.  
Soon Charles shall see he spared no foe he met,  
For all about him he'll find four hundred men,  
Some wounded, some clean through the body cleft,  
And some of them made shorter by a head.*

— The Song of Roland, Laisse 155

According to the D&D game rules, clerics are only allowed to use blunt weapons because they are forbidden to shed blood. This practice was followed during part of the Middle Ages, but not throughout; the poet certainly did not think of Turpin as a heretic. Most clerics aren't Christian, anyway. Why deny a follower of Odin the traditional spear, or a priestess of Artemis the bow?

Clerics were perhaps limited to blunt weapons because the



class was created with medieval Catholicism in mind, and to reduce the cleric's effectiveness in melee; in the *Greyhawk* supplement, the best one-handed weapon a cleric can use is a mace, which does 1-6 points of damage on man-sized opponents, but fighters can use a sword for 1-8 points. The difference in damage helped separate their fighting ability at low levels — at higher levels, the cleric is on a less effective combat table than the fighter, and the weapons limitation then seems redundant.

In the *ADVANCED D&D™* books, the blunt-weapon rule is retained, even though in AD&D a mace is about as good as a longsword, and no form of Christianity is mentioned in the *DEITIES & DEMIGODS™* Cyclopedia.

The rule should be thrown out. At the very least, a cleric should be able to use the weapon sacred to his god. Is it also not more proper to have clerics use weapons traditional to their culture? Turpin did very well throwing pagans out of the saddle with his lance. Why should he have all the fun?

Game balance probably won't suffer if clerics are allowed to use all weapons. Although they'd fight as well as fighters at low levels, this is not enough to cause everyone to give up on fighters — clerics are bound to their gods, which causes them all sorts of trouble; fighters can do what they please, as long as they aren't caught. That should be enough to encourage players toward fighters without extra enticements.

If you want to weaken clerics anyway, try one of two easy solutions; either have clerics hit at -1, or make six points the maximum damage from their weapons, so a sword that normally does 1-8 points of damage still does only six if the roll is a seven or eight. Either method should tone down the clerics just enough to make the fighters insufferably smug.

### Conclusions

The main thing to remember when playing or refereeing clerics is that the gods are always watching, and that clerics know it.



No slip goes unnoticed, and with most gods this means that no slip goes unpunished. A cleric needs to know what his god wants, and he needs to do it. For details, see the *Gods, Demigods, and Heroes* supplement, the *DEITIES & DEMIGODS* Cyclopedica, or your local Dungeon Master. This allegiance to a deity need not restrict a cleric character unbearably; after all, there are lots of gods, they're all after power, and they all want different things. Surely there's one to suit any player character's taste.

*A king was there, his name was Corsablis,  
From a far land he came, from Barbary;  
The Saracens he calls, and thus he speaks:  
"Well we are placed this field of arms to keep;  
For of the Franks the number is but weak,  
And we may well despise the few we see.  
Charles cannot come to help them in their need,  
This is the day their deaths are all decreed!"  
Archbishop Turpin has listened to his speech,  
And hates him worse than any man that breathes,  
His golden spurs he strikes into his steed,*

*And rides against him right valiant for the deed.  
He breaks the buckler, he's split the hauberk's steel,  
Into his breast driven the lance-head deep,  
He spits him through, on high the body heaves,  
And hurls him dead a spear's length o'er the lea.  
Earthward he looks and sees him at his feet,  
But yet to chide him he none the less proceeds:  
"Vile infidel, you lied between your teeth!  
Charles my good lord to help us will not cease,  
Nor have the French the least desire to flee.  
These friends of your stock — still we're like to leave;  
Here's news for you — you'll die, and there you'll be.  
Frenchmen, strike home! Forget not your high breed!  
The first good stroke is ours, God's gramercy!"  
He shouts "Mountjoy!" to hearten all the field.*  
— The Song of Roland, Laisse 95

(Quoted passages are from *THE SONG OF ROLAND*, translated by Dorothy L. Sayers, published by Penguin Books, 625 Madison Ave., New York NY 10022. Reprinted by permission of the author's agents, David Higham Associates Limited, London.)

# THE SENSE OF SACRIFICES

by Douglas Loss

Sacrifices are an essential part of most religious traditions. These offerings to the gods serve to indicate reverence and a willingness to serve in any way needed. As such, normal sacrifices must be made regularly, as gestures of thanks for victory in battle, good fortune in finding treasure, or any generally good occurrence.

Over and above the standard type of sacrifice is the sort used when a cleric wishes to call on his or her deity for a "miracle." A miracle is a spell higher in level than the normal limit of the cleric in question. If a god has been favorably impressed by the piety of his servant, he will grant — on a one-time-only basis — the ability to cast a spell "miraculously." This miracle spell will generally be sufficient to accomplish the requested or desired purpose, because the success of a miracle reflects directly on the competence of the god. If a god's miracles aren't enough to do his will, he isn't much of a god. Of course, this doesn't mean the cleric will necessarily use the spell to his or her, best advantage.

What constitutes a decent sacrifice? There are three types: inanimate, animal, and sentient. Inanimate sacrifices are either objects of intrinsic value such as gold, gems, fine wines or oils, or rare spices or scents; or objects of symbolic value such as an idol or image of the god, or something related to the mythology of the god. The symbolic objects must be consecrated beforehand. A good example of this is druid's mistletoe. It's symbolic of the permanence of life and natural things, regardless of the appearances. It is consecrated by the ritual collection method (gold, sickle, catching in a bowl, etc.).

Intrinsically valuable objects increase the chances of the god granting a miracle by 2% for each standard measure of material. Each DM must determine these standard measures for his campaign. They might be 100 gp in coin, an equivalent-value gem, a cask of wine, 5 drams of perfume, etc.

Symbolically valuable objects are specific to each campaign, and their increases to the probability of being granted a miracle should be determined individually by each DM. In no case should the increase be more than 5% for each symbolically valuable object in the sacrifice.

Animal sacrifices are those animals not considered either

sacred or unclean by the god. In general, each animal sacrifice increases the chance of a miracle by 2%; if the animal used is especially favored by the god as a sacrifice, it adds 3%. Such animals must be ritually dedicated to the god immediately before being killed. Just shouting, "For (god's name)!" and slicing won't do.

Sentient sacrifices are thinking creatures, of an alignment greatly divergent from the cleric's. They increase the chances of a miracle by 5% each. An attempt must be made to convert any sentient sacrifice to the cleric's god. Only upon the failure of the attempt to convert will the sentient count as a sacrifice. Those of lawful or good alignment must diligently work at this conversion attempt. Others needn't be quite so zealous.

As with all sacrifices, sentients must be sacrificed according to strict ritual.

Increasing the amounts of a sacrifice raises the chance of being granted a miracle. However, in no case will the chance of a miracle be greater than somewhere around 50%, no matter how many sacrifices are made. Of course, there's no reason a DM must tell the player that.

Once a cleric has sacrificed as much as he or she feels necessary, percentile dice are rolled to see if the miracle is granted. Whatever the outcome, the sacrifices no longer can be counted toward the next attempt.

If a cleric attempts to gain miracles too often (more than perhaps once a year or so), the maximum possible probability will go down 5% with each successive attempt (i.e., the next attempt will be no more than 45%). If the probability gets down to 20%, a check must be made (if the miracle isn't granted) for the god's wrath. The chance of god's wrath starts at 50% and increases by 5% for each subsequent miracle attempt, successful or not. Eventually, the god's going to get mad.

Obviously, miracles must be carefully prepared for and closely moderated. They will never happen on the spur of the moment. That sort of activity is called divine intervention — and that *might* happen *once* in a long campaign.

And there you are. Oh, you don't think this sort of thing would fit in your campaign? You're sure? (Light the votive candles, boys, start chanting quietly, and hand me the ceremonial dagger...)

You're sure?



## INTRODUCTION

*SAGE ADVICE* offers answers to questions about the D&D® and AD&D™ rules and how those rules can be interpreted. The answers provided in this column are not "official" rulings, and should not be considered as such by people who make use of the answers to solve a problem in their game-playing.

Because of the great amount of questions received for *SAGE ADVICE*, the sage cannot guarantee to send out individual answers to questioners, even if a return envelope is enclosed. Questions and answers will be published in *DRAGON* magazine as frequently as space permits. Preference is usually given to questions of a general nature instead of questions which pertain to something that happened in a specific adventure. Questions should be sent to Sage Advice, c/o *DRAGON* magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

\* \* \*

**The DMG is very specific on how magic-users receive their starting spells, but I cannot tell how to give clerics their starting spells and how many of them to start with.**

A cleric who is starting an adventuring career has already spent a long time affirming and strengthening his faith. As outlined in the DMG, clerical spells of first and second level are obtained by "inspiration" — that is, without needing the prior approval of a deity or a servant of the deity (such as is the case with spells of third level or higher). A cleric is assumed to be in good standing with his deity when he begins as a first-level character, and is entitled to choose from all of the first-level spells, up to the limit allowable because of the cleric's wisdom score — 3 spells for those with wisdom of 14 or more, 2 spells for those with wisdom of 13, and always at least 1 spell.

If the cleric remains in good standing with his deity, the continued acquisition and replenishment of first- and second-level spells will be automatic, assuming the cleric spends 15 minutes in prayer per spell level each day. However, the DM must constantly assess the relationship between the cleric and his deity. Transgressions by even a first-level cleric should not go unpunished, but that punishment will almost always be meted out by mortal servants of the deity (higher-level clerics). As punishment, a low-level cleric might be forbidden to use a certain spell — or all spells — for a length of time, though this must always be decided by the DM. Low-level clerics should remember that even though they don't have to ask for first- and second-level spells, they aren't always automatically entitled to receive them if they don't remain wholly faithful.

\* \* \*

**If a turned monster is attacked by the cleric who turned him, will the monster fight back?**

Wouldn't you? Of course the monster will fight back. "Hostile acts" of any sort (DMG, page 66) will disrupt and negate the

cleric's effect on the turned creature. However, the monster will not necessarily continue to fight. The disrupt/on only lasts for the round in which it takes place, after which the cleric may again attempt to turn the creature.

\* \* \*

**Even though a cleric can only receive new spells from his/her deity once per day, is it possible for a cleric to appeal to his/her deity for spells more than once a day if the first appeal is not granted?**

Well, anything's possible. A cleric's chance of getting spells depends almost exclusively on how well he's getting along with the deity he serves. If a deity withholds spells because of displeasure with the cleric, praying for atonement would be the prudent thing to do, instead of making the same request again right away. Of course, emergency circumstances can dictate extreme measures: A cleric may well justify asking for a replenishment of one or more spells twice in one day if it is truly a life-or-death situation, or if some other serious peril makes it worth taking the chance of asking twice. If the deity doesn't agree that the circumstances warrant a second request, the second answer may well be more than a simple "no."

\* \* \*

**How much area may be caused to glow by a *Light* or *Continual light* spell? Do the clerical reverses of these spells blacken 4" and 12" diameter spheres, respectively? If so, what's the good of *Darkness*, 15' radius?**

An interesting three-part question: Part two answers part one, and part three doesn't seem to make sense. Yes, the reverses of the cleric spells *Light* and *Continual light* would "blacken" globes of that diameter — the same diameter as the globe of light formed when the "normal" version of the spell is cast. Nothing beyond the 4" or 12" diameter sphere of light or darkness would be affected — that is, the light sphere doesn't "glow" and give off light to the area beyond the limit of the sphere. What's the good of the *Darkness* spell? Well, the clerical *Light* spells can be reversed, but the magic-user spells can't, so there isn't any duplication of the sort that the question seems to suggest.

\* \* \*

**How long do the paralyzing effects of a glyph of warding (*peh*) last?**

That's up to the DM. (If you want a recommendation from the sage, try 1-6 turns.) There are no details in the AD&D game rules on exactly which glyphs should be employed in a campaign or what their characteristics should be. The glyph of paralysis (*peh*) which is illustrated on page 41 of the DMG, along with some others, is meant as an example of how a glyph might

appear and what its general function might be. Other suggestions for "typical glyphs" are found in the spell description in the Players Handbook, but players and DMs must take it from there, formulating all the specific rules governing how severe and how long-lasting the effects of a glyph are.

\* \* \*

**Can an evil cleric cast Cure Wounds spells? Can a good cleric use a Cause Wounds spell? What about clerics who are neutral with respect to good and evil?**

**How do lawful neutral and chaotic neutral clerics behave with respect to undead? Do they befriend/command them as an evil cleric would, or do they turn them as a good cleric would?**

Judging by the general guidelines of the AD&D alignment system, causing or promoting pain and suffering is an evil act, while counteracting or preventing that pain and suffering is a good thing to do. It's not right to say absolutely that an evil cleric can't use a Cure spell; healing another evil creature (or perhaps oneself) is not necessarily viewed as a good act when performed by an evil character. Likewise, a good cleric cannot always be condemned for using a Cause Wounds spell. Good clerics *do* use weapons, and the purpose of a weapon attack is the same as that of a Cause Wounds spell: If damaging or destroying an enemy is necessary to save your skin, then causing pain and suffering suddenly becomes a lot less evil — in fact, neither good nor evil, but neutral (in one's own best interest). But in almost all cases, it's best for clerics who want to remain in good standing with their deities to choose the version of a reversible spell that best fits their general philosophy and purpose. A good general guideline is given in the description of the reverse of the Raise Dead spell, Slay Living: "An evil cleric can freely use the reverse spell; a good cleric must exercise extreme caution in its employment..." In most cases where a reversible spell is distinctly good in one version and evil in the other, evil clerics have the most latitude in determining which version they'd like to learn. That's what you get for being good.

It can be much more difficult to play a cleric who is neutral with respect to evil and good, and much more taxing for the DM who must represent the deity that judges the appropriateness of the cleric's actions. To make life simpler, a cleric's deity may make it known that he prefers his followers to use one certain form of a reversible spell. When a preference is not specified, and no other circumstances prevent it, the cleric would logically be free to choose which version of the spell he wished to learn — and he would still be subject to the judgement of his god after he cast it (you never know what a chaotic neutral god will do).

As far as dealings with undead are concerned, the same guidelines would seem to be applicable: The cleric and his deity have a choice of how to cause undead to react to them. A lawful neutral deity, for example, might feel more benevolent toward a ghost than a ghoul, because of the monsters' alignments with respect to law and chaos. In encounters with such creatures, the actions of a cleric of that deity would be governed by the instruction he has received, or by the cleric's decision on which course of action would be looked on most favorably by his god. Perhaps a non-evil, non-good cleric of sufficiently high level would be trusted by his deity enough to make "to turn or not to turn" decisions on a case-by-case basis, whereas a lower-level cleric would need an occasional suggestion or instruction — or perhaps might be allowed to learn from his mistakes. Because of the unique personal relationship which must exist between a cleric and his deity, it is impossible to make concrete judgements about any subject which involves this relationship.

\* \* \*

**In previous clarifications in this column and from the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ cyclopedia, we know that elves and half-orcs**

**have no souls and therefore cannot be raised from the dead or resurrected. Since Raise Dead and Resurrection return the soul to the body, it must reasonably follow that the reverses of these spells (Slay Living and Destruction) release the soul from the body. Does this mean that elves and half-orcs are not affected by the reverse spells, since they have no souls to release?**

Good question, but your reasoning isn't quite sound. The unreversed forms of those spells do indeed "return the soul to the body" — but they also do a lot more. They reintroduce biological, physical life into a body; otherwise, a lifeless body with a soul inside it would be just that — a lifeless body. The physical trauma that the recipient of a Raise Dead spell goes through is considerable, so much so that the revived person is "weak and helpless" and must rest to regain his former vigor. So, it is reasonable to assume that an elf or half-orc struck by a Slay Living spell would undergo physical trauma to the same degree, and in this case, the trauma is great enough to kill even a soulless being. Likewise, the trauma caused by a Destruction spell, which turns the victim to dust, is something which no creature could endure and remain alive.

The reasoning which suggests that a creature can't be affected by the reverse of a spell if that creature is immune to the unreversed form breaks down under a bit of examination. Many reversible spells are defined in such a way that a figure cannot possibly be immune to both forms of the spell at once. For example, should a blind character, obviously immune (at least for the moment) to Cause Blindness, also be unaffected by Cure Blindness? Of course not. There is no general rule which indicates that someone who is unaffected by one form of a spell is automatically unaffected by the reverse as well.

\* \* \*

**What happens when a Resurrection or a Raise Dead is cast on an undead?**

Hmmm. It stands to reason that undead can be resurrected, as long as their living bodies had souls. But according to the spell description for Resurrection, a cleric can resurrect the "bones" of a dead body — that is, there must be some part of the body available for the cleric to touch for the process of resurrection to take place. Any undead which is encountered in an immaterial, gaseous or ethereal form could not be resurrected, because there's nothing for the cleric to lay his hands on — even if he dared to touch one.

An undead creature which is corporeal, and especially one which has retained at least a vestige of the appearance it had in life, could conceivably be resurrected with a touch — again, if the cleric is willing and able to withstand the effects of that touch. It's worth noting here that a cleric who casts Resurrection is incapacitated for at least one day afterward, during which time the cleric cannot engage in combat or spell-casting. Unless some means is at hand to control the resurrected creature and save the cleric's skin, he's going to be in a lot of trouble after the spell is cast.

A further guideline on the subject is found in the Monster Manual in the description for ghouls. A human who is killed by a ghoul will himself become a ghoul, unless a Bless spell is cast upon the corpse (in which case the victim is simply dead). The corpse could *then* be resurrected — *after* being blessed. Logically, the same procedure — bless first, raise later — could be required for an attempt to resurrect any undead creature.

Depending on the DM's interpretation of "touch," it might be possible for a cleric to lay hands on, for instance, the immobilized body of a vampire without suffering the loss of 2 life energy levels which accompanies a vampire's hit on a victim. (Since the vampire isn't doing the "hitting" or "touching," he can't do any damage.) But what about the mummy? Its touch "inflicts a rotting disease on any hit," but it's logical to assume that anyone who initiates contact with a mummy would also be subject to the disease. Since each type of undead is at least slightly different



from each other type, there are no general rules which can apply. Whether or not to require a *Bless* spell, whether or not to assess damage upon a "touch," and any other particular questions are left to the DM's discretion.

*Raise Dead* is a different matter entirely. The spell description pretty well covers it: The vital parts of the body must be present, which rules out skeletons and any non-corporeal undead, and the undead creature must have been in a non-alive state for a length of time which does not exceed the limit of the spell's power. The Monster Manual gives specifics for some cases: spectres, wights and wraiths will be destroyed by a *Raise Dead* spell (unless they make a save vs. magic), and a mummy can be resurrected by casting *Cure Disease* followed by *Raise Dead*.

If a *Bless* is required before a *Resurrection* attempt can be successful, the blessing need not also be required for a *Raise Dead* attempt, because the soul hasn't been away from the body as long and the newly created undead hasn't fallen entirely into the clutches of eviltry.

\* \* \*

**An evil cleric has control of a spectre. The spectre drains the life force from another character, making it a half-strength spectre under control of the full-strength spectre. Does the cleric automatically have control of the half-strength spectre, or does the cleric have to attempt to command it to service (turn it)?**

It doesn't matter who's in control, or whether the first spectre can control the new one. What does matter is that there is now a spectre where there wasn't one when the first spectre was brought under control. A new spectre, even a half-strength one, must be dealt with separately just as if the beastie were another full-strength one that had just come onto the scene.

Wights, wraiths and spectres all have the ability to turn victims into half-strength creatures of their own type. The half-strength

creatures are not affected by the result of any successful attempt to turn which preceded their becoming undead. Another attempt to turn should be rolled on the appropriate row of the "Clerics Affecting Undead" chart. Alternatively, because the new creatures are only half-strength monsters, the DM may allow rolls on the chart to be treated as if the half-strength undead were a type of undead with half as many hit dice.

\* \* \*

**The *Wand of Orcus* is said to cause death upon touch, except to those of "like status" such as saints. What level does a cleric have to attain to be considered a saint?**

The AD&D game rules do not define conditions which must be met for a character to attain "sainthood." Specifics like this will vary depending on the pantheon of deities a DM employs in the campaign, and is entirely a matter for the DM to decide. Perhaps "sainthood" as the term generally applies might not even be possible in a certain mythos; in another, it may take the form of divine ascension. In yet another, sainthood might be a status which is attainable by a cleric of sufficiently high level. In such a situation, it seems reasonable that no cleric (or druid) should be considered for sainthood unless and until the character has the ability to cast seventh-level spells.

For a cleric to be awarded sainthood would be a great honor for the character. It would give the cleric many more powers, not the least of which would be the ability to survive a swat from the *Wand of Orcus*. (Note that the wand only causes death "upon touch" when that touch is in the form of a hit in combat, and only when the wand is wielded by Orcus himself.) But achieving sainthood might not be preferable to the player, if the DM rules that the sanctified cleric must become a non-player character instead of continuing to be a player character. Are you sure you want your 20th-level cleric to be a saint after all?

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# Basic D&D® points of view...

by J. Eric Holmes  
Editor, first edition  
D&D® Basic Set rules

The first thing to realize about the rules for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Basic Set is for whom they are written. Most of you reading this article already know how to play a D&D® or AD&D™ game. Most of you learned how to play by watching a game or having a friend guide you through your first game. If you have seen a game played, the rules are pretty easy to understand.

But the D&D Basic Rulebook is written for people who have never seen a game. It is intended to teach the game to someone who's coming to it for the first time. All other considerations should be secondary to teaching how to play the game with a minimum of confusion. I like to think that the first Basic Set did just that.

The new edition of the Basic Set, edited by Tom Moldvay, certainly does so as well. The second edition, as sold in the boxed set with dice and D&D Module B2, *The Keep on the Borderlands* by Gary Gygax, is the best possible introduction to the D&D game. Those of us who are already playing D&D games will be able to find lots of things to "complain" about (Why only seven character classes? Heal light wounds cures paralysis? A charmed Magic-User is too confused to do magic? Boy, that last rule would make a dramatic change in the conduct of my game, where the player characters would be apt to yell, "Don't kill the evil magician! Let me try to charm him first, then use him to wipe out the rest of the monsters on this level."). But actually these are minor quibbles to someone who is just learning to play.

When Tactical Studies Rules published the first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rule sets, the three little books in brown covers, they were intended to guide people who were already *playing*

the game. As a guide to *learning* the game, they were incomprehensible. There was no description of the use of the combat table. Magic spells were listed, but there was no mention of what we all now know is a vital aspect of the rules: that as the magic user says his spell, the words and gestures for it fade from his memory and he cannot say it again.

When I edited the rules prior to the first edition of the D&D Basic Set, it was to help the thousands (now millions) of people who wanted to play the game and didn't know how to get started. Gary Gygax acknowledged that some sort of beginner's book was badly needed, and he encouraged me to go ahead with it.

What I discovered is that the invention has four vital parts: The



Basic Set, first edition

first is character generation (the traditional 3d6 determination of characteristics). This character section must also include rules for different races and for special talents. There must be rules for character advancement of some sort.

The second part concerns magic (or, in a science-fiction game, high technology, which is the same thing). Rules must be given for how to perform magic, who has magical abilities, etc. There must be a list of allowable spells and their prerequisites. There must be rules for possible spell failure, for saving throws, for magic resistance and so forth.

Third, a section on "the encounter." This is mostly rules for combat and the all-important combat table, but there also need to be rules for movement, for hiding and detection (listening at doors), for negotiation and monster reactions, for running away, and so forth.

Finally, there needs to be a section of the rulebook intended for the DM. This includes descriptions of monsters and non-player characters, and treasures and magical items. It also includes guidelines for setting up and conducting adventures, usually with several examples.

(Continued on page 16)



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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The opinions and observations expressed by the authors of these articles are entirely their own, and are not necessarily the opinions of TSR Hobbies, Inc., or of Dragon Publishing. As always, persons with opposing viewpoints and different observations are encouraged to make their opinions known to the publisher.



# from the editors old and new

by Tom Moldvay  
Editor, second edition  
D&D® Basic Set rules

Why was a new edition of the D&D® Basic Set rules needed? First of all, it was necessary for the Basic rules to be in the same format as their sequel, the D&D Expert Set rules. Otherwise, it would be difficult to use the two sets together, as they were meant to be used. The D&D Expert rules build on the D&D Basic rules, they do not replace them.

Second, good as it was, the earlier edition still had minor flaws. The large number of questions received by TSR Hobbies showed that many areas of the D&D rules were still difficult for beginners to grasp. It was necessary to reorganize and re-edit the rules, keeping in mind that most new D&D players are not hard-core gamers and have never played a role-playing game before.

Third, the market has changed since the earlier rules edition. The first D&D market was made up of game buffs and college students. Today, the majority of D&D players are high-school and junior-high students. The new rules edition takes into account the younger readership in its style of writing.

Fourth, the TSR staff had answered thousands of rule questions, playtested countless dungeons at conventions, and received myriad letters detailing players' experiences with D&D game rules. Because of the accumulated experience of the staff, and the help of the gamers, we could now pinpoint which rules needed additional clarification.

When I edited the D&D Basic rules, I tried to stress clarity, simplicity, and conciseness. The organization of the rules was particularly important since the rules would set the format for all other rule books in the D&D system, such as the D&D Expert rules.

One important point to keep in mind when reading the D&D Basic rules is that they are not hard-and-fast rules, they are rule *suggestions*. The system is complete and highly playable, but it is flexible enough that Dungeon Masters and players need not fear experimenting with the rules. DMs and players, by mutual consent, are always welcome to change any rule they wish, or to add new rules when necessary. Because of this rule flexibility, individuals who learned to play using the original D&D Collectors Edition rules, or the earlier edition of the D&D Basic rules, can use the new edition without changing their campaign.

Much of the work put into the new edition was in reorganization. Whenever possible, step-by-step instructions were given because that type of direction is easiest to understand. Numerous examples were added, because examples often clarify rule descriptions. The edge of the booklet was drilled with holes so that it could be placed in a notebook, thus cutting down on the usual wear and tear the rulebook takes. The rules were organized into a number of different sections which logically build on one another, are easy to follow and read, and are easy to find by using the Table of Contents. Furthermore, the general section headings will remain the same for all rulebooks in the D&D system. All gaming terms are defined before the actual rule sections begin, and the definitions are repeated in a glossary. Finally, the rules were indexed.

My favorite two sections of the rules were Part 8: Dungeon Master Information and page B62, dealing with Inspirational Source Material. Much of the information given in these two sections is new.

Many players feel that becoming a DM is difficult. I tried to make it as easy to become a DM as possible. After all, DMs like to play too, but if there is only one DM per group, that person never



Basic Set, second edition

gets the chance to play. Novice DMs are given detailed instructions and as many helpful tips as possible.

The rules include a description of typical dungeon scenarios and settings. They give suggestions for common types of room traps, treasure traps, and special trap types. They provide a simple system for creating an NPC party. Finally, they outline a sample dungeon, designed so that, if desired, one section could be played immediately.

I also enjoyed sharing my favorite books and authors with readers. I have always found books to be excellent inspirational material when designing adventures. I am sorry that, because of space considerations, the list could not have been longer.

The Basic D&D game rules are directly based on the original Collectors Edition rules. The original rules gave the first gaming system for fantasy role-playing and, in my opinion, the D&D game rules remain the best fantasy role-playing rules available to game enthusiasts.

I am proud to have edited the new edition of the D&D Basic Set rules. It was our intent to retain the flavor of the original game while improving upon and extending the rules, so that the game could be more quickly and more easily enjoyed by new players. I believe our efforts were a success.



## Basic Set

(Continued from page 14)

I struggled very hard to make all these things clear to the readers of the first Basic Rules and yet retain the flavor and excitement of the original rules. I even used the words of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Collectors Edition (the original books) whenever possible. I had disagreements with Gary over some items (I wanted to use a spell point system, for instance), but we kept the rules as close as possible to the original intent. D&D is, after all, a truly unique invention, probably as remarkable as the die, or the deck of cards, or the chessboard. The inventor's vision needs to be respected.

The first Basic Set rulebook contained some irritating typographical errors. Someone at TSR rewrote the wandering monster table and put in a number of creatures that were not in my list of monster descriptions. But most of the errors were corrected for the second printing.

The second edition Basic Set makes a number of minor changes and adds 18 pages' worth of new material to the booklet. Most of the changes and additions are, I think, improvements. I would like to examine a few of them more closely.

Character classes: Player characters are restricted to being a Fighter, Cleric, Thief, Magic-User, Elf, Halfling or Dwarf. This probably covers the roles most beginning players want to try, but I am personally sorry to see the range of possibilities so restricted. The original rules (the three little brown books) specifically stated that a player could be a dragon if he wanted to be, and if he started at first level. For several years there was a dragon player character in my own game. At first level he could puff a little fire and do one die of damage. He could, of course, fly, even at first level. He was one of the most unpopular characters in the game, but this was because of the way he was played, not because he was a dragon. I enjoyed having dragons, centaurs, samurai and witch doctors in the game. My own most successful player character was a Dreenoi, an insectoid creature borrowed from McEwan's *Starguard*. He reached fourth level (as high as any of my personal characters ever got), made an unfortunate decision, and was turned into a pool of green slime.

Character alignment: This is the most difficult of the D&D concepts to get across. The new rules spend more space on alignments and do a much better job of explaining them, using practical examples. Alignment is Law, Chaos and Neutral. Good and Evil are not discussed as separate alignments at all, which I think makes better sense. The first Basic Set had one of those diagrams which said that blink dogs were lawful good and brass dragons were chaotic good. I never felt that this was particularly helpful. I am sure Gary Gygax has an idea in his mind of what chaotic good (or other "obscure" alignments, etc.) may be, but it certainly isn't clear to me. Without meaning to be irreverent, I am also sure that Buddha knew what he meant by nirvana, but that doesn't clarify it in my mind either. I think the new rules simplify the issue appropriately.

Armor Class: The new rulebook continues to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of armor types found in the AD&D game, which also incorporates splint mail, scale mail, and ring mail. This is good, but herein also lies a missed opportunity. I think the numbering system should have been adjusted to make plate armor and shield, the best non-magical protection possible, AC 1. Then all magic armor could be represented by zero or negative numbers to indicate armor class. A minor point, at best.

While I am on the armor and equipment page, "mace" should have been included in the glossary (and the very existence of a glossary is a tremendous improvement). Many modern-day players think "mace" is an aerosol can of tear gas!

Magic and spells: The new rules specify that if an adventure lasts longer than a day, the Magic-User can get his or her spells back through a period of rest and concentration. I'm glad to see

this securely placed in the rules. All of us who act as Dungeon Masters have had to allow this on longer adventures. Actually, the "spell book" is often a needless complication and can be dispensed with. Of course, a particular DM can make spell books a vital part of the game—suppose evil Magic-Users hired a high-level Thief to steal the player characters' books?

*Phantasmal force* has been added to the available spell list. The list is still much shorter than that in the original D&D rules or in the AD&D books. *Phantasmal force* has been appropriately weakened in the new rules, however; even if the victim fails a saving throw, he or she is not permanently harmed by the phantasm. If determined to be killed, the character actually only passes out, and recovers in 1d4 turns. Presumably, hit points lost in this manner are also restored after 1-4 turns. This makes the *phantasmal force* a much fairer attack. With the old spell, the M-U could summon a dragon or demon and, if the poor victim failed his saving throw trying to disbelieve it, he was as good as dead. A phantom, it seems to me, should indeed be terrifying, but basically harmless.

Organizing a Party, The Caller: I think this rule should have been thrown out. I put it into the first Basic Set because it was in the original invention. I have never seen a successful game where one of the players was elected caller and actually did all the talking to the DM. Usually everybody talks at once. The resulting confusion is much more lifelike; one can hear the characters dithering at the cross corridor as the monsters approach. "Run this way!" "Charge them!" "Get out of the way, I'm throwing a spell!" "Here goes the magic crossbow bolt!" "Not from the rear of the party!" "I'm climbing the wall!"

As the players learn to work together as a team, a leader will often evolve. I think it is more fun to always allow a character to call out his or her own action and see the consternation on the other players' faces. Also, this encourages the shy player (yes, there are shy players!) to get into the swing of things. "What's your halfling going to do?"

Infravision: Saying that infravision is the ability to "see" heat patterns is putting a magical ability into terms of mundane universe physics. I think it would have been better to leave it as pure magic. I know this "heat seeing" explanation is the one favored by Gygax, but it embraces too many inconsistencies. Living creatures give off heat. Okay, but how about the undead? Do they appear as spots of cold? If so, a dwarf or elf can always identify a vampire by looking at him in the dark. What about inanimate objects? If a monster (all monsters have infravision) charges into a room, can he see the furniture before he runs into it? How about a rope stretched across the corridor? It would have been better just to say, "It's magic."

The Encounter: Moldvay correctly stresses the importance of using "turn" when a one-minute turn is meant, and "round" for a ten-second round, and not mixing them up. How much confusion would have been avoided if the rules had always followed this simple edict!

The new rules introduce surprise and initiative die rolls into the combat situation. I had merely had the creature with the highest dexterity strike first. The initiative roll makes combat a good deal more chancy, and I'm not sure I like it. I will not object, to it on the basis of its being less "realistic," however!

The game's entire combat system has been criticized for being unrealistic, and many game designers have tried to improve upon it, but with little success. It is possible to make a combat system that is more like a real hand-to-hand battle, but then it takes too long. Combat and magic are the high points of an adventure, but you don't want the rules to be so complicated that a beginning player can't master them. And, even when your character's life is at stake, doing innumerable die rolls for every move can get boring. The present system is fast and workable. Critics who complain about its lack of realism have forgotten that it is not intended to be a simulation of *real* combat. It is a simulation of combat as it occurs in most fantasy novels, and at this it succeeds admirably.

The combat sequence has been slightly and appropriately changed. The new rules provide for fighting withdrawal as well as retreat, and there is always the possibility of a hit (20) and always the possibility of a miss (1). These are improvements over the original system.

Monsters are given a morale rating. If they fail a morale check during combat, they try to flee or surrender. Player characters, of course, are incredibly brave and may fight to the death if they wish. This "run away, run away!" rule for monsters is a good one, and allows for far more interesting fights and more satisfying victories for the players. The DM, if he wants to be sneaky, can have those fleeing orcs make a bid for revenge. They would be likely to set up a trap or an ambush to catch the unwary characters on their way back out of the dungeon. They might go down a level and try to negotiate an alliance with a more fearsome monster from the depths to come up and help them get even!

I think the present combat system lacks only one device common to sword-and-sorcery tales, but it is one so commonly used that I miss it in the game. There is very little chance for the hero to be knocked out and taken prisoner. Yet, that is so frequently what happens in a fictional battle. True, there is a provision in the rules for subduing dragons by "attacking with the flat of the sword," etc., which could be extended to other creatures. It requires declaring at the start of melee that one is trying for subdual, and it does not provide for "knocked out" as a result of ordinary combat. In ordinary combat you are either alive or dead! Perhaps inserting a "knockout" rule would needlessly complicate the system, but when I think of all the times John Carter or Conan was overwhelmed by enemies and came to in some sort of dungeon trap, I miss the opportunity to re-enact some of their situations.

Monsters: There is a much more extensive monster list in this second edition, including many not in the AD&D Monster Manual. This gives the beginning DM plenty to work with. I'm glad to see Moldvay included the dragons just as I did in the first edition. It seems almost silly to describe dragons in a book intended only for player characters up to the third level. On the other hand, think how disappointed you would be if you were an inexperienced player who bought a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game and found nothing about dragons inside!

The rulebook continues with a section on treasure and an example of how to plan a scenario and draw your first map. The section "Dungeon Mastering as a fine art" has been expanded. The beginning DM is given advice on dealing with "That's not in the rules!" "Your character

doesn't know that!" and other crises that arise in a beginners' game. Excellent: The more help we can give the poor DM, the better.

There is a page-long list of "inspirational source material" which is more complete than the one given in the AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide.

I didn't have such a list in the first edition; this is someone else's inspired idea. I wish I'd thought of it. Do you know there may be people out there playing a D&D game who have never read *The Lord of the Rings*?

Finally, there is a glossary (which complements the one in *The Keep on the Borderlands*) and, hallelujah, an index! Any book this complicated needs an index.

The original Basic Set had a final page of tables which could be torn out and used for reference. I wish it had been included again.

A few comments on the other components in the new Basic Set: First, there's the module, *The Keep on the Borderlands*. This is, in my opinion, the best thing Gygax has written for us yet. It contains all kinds of hints for the DM and the players. There's enough stuff on the map to keep a low-level party busy adventuring for weeks. Truly a bargain.

Then there's the dice. When the first Basic Set was marketed, it included a set

of very cheap dice. I was, understandably, proud of the project, and every time I met a D&D player for the first time, I would introduce myself as the "editor of the Basic Set."

"The what?"

"You know, the box that has the big dragon on the cover."

"Oh, yeah," my new acquaintance would say, "the one with the really ugly dice."

"But I didn't have anything to do with picking the dice!" I would cry.

Well, the second edition has a different set of dice. The 20-sided die is numbered from 1 to 20. (Now there's an innovation.) Unfortunately, the dice are small, hard to read even when marked with crayon, and, let's face it, really ugly. I'm sorry, Tom, but it looks like you too are going to have to go through the next few years feeling responsible for ugly dice!

I think the new Basic Set rules are an improvement over the first edition. Not a big quantum jump ahead, but better in a number of minor ways. I'm proud of the original Basic Set, and I like to think I did a good job of describing a great invention, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, so that everyone could enjoy it. The nicest compliment I ever got for it was from a game-store manager who said, "That's made a lot of people happy."

May the new edition do the same.

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# Adding depth to the Flanaess

Leomund's  
TINY  
HUT

by Lenard Lakofka

## INTRODUCTION

Len Lakofka has been playing *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* and *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* games since there were such things, and this particular contribution to the game system of the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* fantasy world setting is exceptionally useful for those who have not established a detailed campaign in a specific area of the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK*. It is also nearly as useful for those who have such an established campaign, but who allow "outsiders" to come in from other parts of the world.

This system allows not only for determination of the birthplace and alignment of a character, but it also provides an interesting mix of languages known for both humans and demi-humans. With these developments comes a greater understanding of the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK* and its language forms; and the more highly developed the background for a campaign, the more easily such a campaign is managed. For these reasons I am particularly enthusiastic about the treatment Len has provided. I have checked it over for "accuracy," and a few minor changes have been made in order to more closely conform with the actual area. I have also appended a brief description of the racial types common in the Flanaess. With these additions, we believe that your campaign on the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK* will be greatly enhanced. Experience will, I am sure, prove this statement to be true.

E. Gary Gyga

## Author's introduction

This article is designed as a supplement to the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK Gazetteer*, though some parts of it can stand alone.

Creating new characters is always fun. The more a player can identify with a character, the better the play of the character tends to be. By adding "meat" to a character, the DM increases interest in that figure.

A character's place of birth and the language(s) he/she can use have long been vital aspects of a character's life history. As I add scenarios to Lendore Isle (see *WORLD OF GREYHAWK*, Spindrift Isles), I am careful to use languages and birthplaces from the "known world" (as defined in *WoG*).

## A human character's place of birth

The chart which follows, used to determine the birthplace of human characters, favors those locations (provinces/countries) where the "most common alignment(s)" is non-evil. Bands of adventurers who are evil can be put together, of course, but since most modules and campaigns are designed for non-evils, only those locations will be given here.

A birthplace chart will give the name of a general location. Either the DM or the player (if the DM prefers) can then select an exact site from the province/country or from the bordering forests or hills.

Place of birth may be important in determining the alignment of a character, but it will not always absolutely define that alignment. In cases of apparent conflict, the DM can simply rule that the family of the character did not practice the predominant

alignment of the area, or perhaps that the family moved to a locale of suitable alignment soon after the birth of the character.

Characters who are of a class or a race which makes a particular alignment mandatory should not be inhibited by the results of the chart. It is entirely possible for a character born in Ull, for instance, to grow up to become a paladin. All that is necessary is for the DM to create a reason why the character is lawful good in a land of chaotics and neutrals.

On the other hand, if the alignments listed for an area are just as "good" for the character as any others, one of the given alignments can be considered a good "random" choice.

## Birthplaces for human characters

| d% roll | Place of birth        | Likely alignments     |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 01-05   | The Great Kingdom     | Any                   |
| 06      | The Sea Barons        | CN                    |
| 07-08   | Lordship of the Isles | LN                    |
| 09-10   | Sunndi                | LN, CG, N             |
| 11      | Idee                  | N, CN                 |
| 12      | Irongate              | LN                    |
| 13-14   | Onnwal                | LN                    |
| 15-17   | Almor                 | LN, LG                |
| 18-28   | Nyrend                | LN, LG, NG, CG        |
| 29      | Ratik                 | N, CE, CN             |
| 30      | Cold Barbarian state  | CN                    |
| 31      | Rovers of the Barrens | CN, N                 |
| 32      | Duchy of Tenh         | LN, N                 |
| 33-34   | Theocracy of the Pale | LN, LG                |
| 35-36   | Shield Lands          | LG, NG, N             |
| 37-41   | County/Duchy of Urnst | N, NG                 |
| 42-44   | Greyhawk              | Any                   |
| 45-54   | Kingdom of Furyondy   | LG, NG, LN            |
| 55      | Tiger/Wolf Nomads     | N, CN                 |
| 56-57   | Ekbir                 | LN, N                 |
| 58      | Tusmit                | N                     |
| 59-62   | Zeif                  | LN, N                 |
| 63-64   | Paynims               | CN, N                 |
| 65      | Ull                   | CN, N, CE             |
| 66      | Ket                   | CN, N                 |
| 67-69   | Perrenland            | LN, N, LG             |
| 70      | Highfolk              | CG, N, CN             |
| 71-82   | Velluna               | LG, NG                |
| 83-84   | March of Bissel       | NG, N, LG, LN         |
| 85      | Gran March            | LN                    |
| 86-87   | Duchy of Geoff        | CG, CN, NG            |
| 88-89   | Sterich               | CG, CN, N             |
| 90-91   | The Yeomanry          | LG, LN                |
| 92-94   | Kingdom of Keoland    | LN, LG, NG, CG, CN, N |
| 95      | Tri-States of Ulek    | LN, LG, CG, N, CN     |
| 96-99   | Wild Coast            | Any                   |
| 00      | Character's choice    | Any                   |

Naturally, neither the DM nor players should feel bound by every birthplace or alignment tendency indicated by the chart. Some places of birth might not seem logical for a certain class of character; for instance, if a character rolls the land of the Frost Barbarians as his place of birth, it is somewhat of a conflict if the character happens to be a magic-user. (The barbarian races would produce fighters, if not berserkers, as their major class.) If a birthplace seems incongruous with the class or other characteristics of a figure, simply re-roll or make a logical selection from the available choices.

#### A demi-human character's place of birth

If a character is of one of the demi-human races, use the table below to determine birthplace. Half-elves are treated as elves; half-orcs appear where humans and humanoids (specifically orcs) reside.

Birthplaces for demi-humans, Main table

| Place of birth                     | Elf   | Dwarf | Gnome | Halfling |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Use subtable at top of next column | 01-05 | 01-05 | 01-05 | 01-05    |
| Sunndi                             | 06-10 | 06-12 | 06-08 | --       |
| Irongate                           | 11    | 13-14 | 09    | 06-16    |
| Onnwal                             | --    | 15-18 | --    | --       |
| County of Urnst                    | --    | --    | --    | 17-29    |
| Ratik                              | --    | 19-36 | 10-13 | --       |
| Duchy of Urnst                     | --    | 37-43 | 14-17 | 30-58    |
| Spindrift Isles                    | 12    | --    | --    | --       |
| Highfolk                           | 13-15 | --    | --    | --       |
| Veluna                             | 16-23 | --    | 18-26 | --       |
| Duchy of Geoff                     | 24-28 | --    | --    | --       |
| Sterich                            | --    | 44-52 | --    | --       |
| Sea Princes                        | 29    | --    | --    | --       |
| Ulek (all)                         | 30-40 | 53-72 | 27-33 | 59-82    |
| Celene                             | 41-52 | --    | 34-38 | --       |
| Wild Coast                         | 53    | 73-74 | 39-41 | 83-88    |
| Dreadwood                          | 54-69 | --    | 42    | --       |
| Gnarley Forest                     | 70-74 | --    | 43-46 | --       |
| Verbobonc                          | 75-76 | --    | 47-52 | --       |
| Grandwood Forest                   | 77-81 | --    | --    | --       |
| Flinty Hills                       | --    | --    | 53-54 | 89-95    |
| Gamboge Forest                     | 82-90 | --    | 55-58 | --       |
| Stark Mounds                       | --    | --    | 59-60 | --       |
| Kron Hills                         | --    | --    | 61-89 | --       |
| Glorioles                          | --    | 75-97 | --    | --       |
| Menowood                           | 91    | --    | --    | --       |
| Silverwood                         | 92    | --    | --    | --       |
| Vesve Forest                       | 93-99 | --    | 90-98 | --       |
| Welkwood                           | 00    | 98-00 | 99-00 | 96-00    |

Birthplaces for demi-humans, Subtable

Given below are places where "few" or "some" demi-humans live, according to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK.

| Place of birth                        | Elf   | Dwarf | Gnome | Halfling |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| The Great Kingdom                     | 01-03 | 01-03 | 01-03 | 01-03    |
| The Sea Barons                        | 04    | 04    | 04    | 04       |
| Lordship of the Isles                 | 05    | 05    | 05    | 05       |
| Idee                                  | 06-08 | 06-08 | 06-08 | 06-08    |
| Almor                                 | 09    | --    | 09    | 09       |
| Frost Barbarians                      | 10    | 09    | 10    | 10       |
| Snow Barbarians                       | 11-13 | 10-12 | 11-13 | 11-13    |
| Ice Barbarians                        | 14    | 13    | 14    | 14       |
| Rovers of the Barrens                 | 15    | 14    | 15    | 15       |
| Duchy of Tenh                         | 16-18 | 15-17 | 16-18 | 16-18    |
| Theocracy of the Pale                 | 19-21 | 18-20 | 19-21 | 19-21    |
| Shield Lands                          | 22    | 21    | 22    | 22       |
| County of Urnst                       | 23    | 22-23 | 23-24 | --       |
| Greyhawk                              | 24-26 | 24-27 | 25-28 | 23-24    |
| Kingdom of Furyondy                   | 27-29 | 28-30 | 29-31 | 25-28    |
| Wolf Nomads                           | 30    | 31    | 32    | 29       |
| Tiger Nomads                          | 31    | 32    | 33    | 30       |
| Tusmit                                | 32    | 33    | 34    | 31       |
| Spindrift Isles                       | --    | 34-36 | 35-37 | 32-34    |
| Ket                                   | 33    | 37    | 38    | 35       |
| Perrenland                            | 34-36 | 38-40 | 39-41 | 36-38    |
| Highfolk                              | --    | 41-43 | 42-44 | 39-41    |
| Veluna                                | --    | 44-50 | --    | 42-48    |
| March of Bissel                       | 37-39 | 51-53 | 45-47 | 49-51    |
| Gran March                            | 40-42 | 54-56 | 48-50 | 52-54    |
| The Mage                              | 43-49 | --    | 51-58 | --       |
| Duchy of Geoff                        | --    | 57-59 | 59-61 | 55-57    |
| Sterich                               | --    | --    | 62-68 | 58-64    |
| Sea Princes                           | --    | 60    | --    | 65       |
| Kingdom of Keoland                    | 50-56 | --    | 69-75 | 66-72    |
| Celene                                | --    | --    | --    | 73-79    |
| Dyvers                                | 57-59 | 61-63 | 76-78 | 80-82    |
| Grandwood                             | --    | 64-66 | 79-81 | 83-85    |
| Lorridges                             | --    | 67-73 | 82-89 | --       |
| Gamboge Forest                        | --    | --    | --    | 86-92    |
| Stark Mounds                          | --    | 74-80 | --    | --       |
| Barrier Peaks                         | --    | 81-87 | --    | --       |
| Axewood                               | 60-67 | --    | --    | --       |
| Fellreev Forest                       | 68-74 | --    | --    | --       |
| Hornwood                              | 75-88 | --    | --    | --       |
| Rieuwood                              | 89-95 | --    | --    | --       |
| Vesve Forest                          | --    | --    | --    | 93-97    |
| Choice of any available, either table | 96-00 | 88-00 | 90-00 | 98-00    |

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**Breaking language barriers**

Once a character's place of birth and alignment are fixed, it is time to determine the language(s) the character speaks. Following hereafter is a list of all possible languages and their basic characteristics, followed by lists to determine the language spoken by the human occupant of a given region.

Common sense and logic must be used when the lists are employed. Suloise, for example, is a language of learned men that is all but forgotten as a primary tongue. It would be silly to have a fighter of low intelligence speak it as a primary language just because that was the result produced.

**WORLD OF GREYHAWK Languages**

| Language                        | Primary or Secondary | Usual speaker                                     |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Suloise                         | Secondary            | Scholars, sages, magic-users, illusionists, bards |
| Flan                            | Primary              | Peasant to king                                   |
| Baklunish                       | Primary              | Peasant to king                                   |
| Oeridian                        | Primary              | Peasant to king                                   |
| Common <sup>1</sup>             | Primary*             | Peasant to king                                   |
| Ferral <sup>2</sup>             | Secondary            | Learned and ranked characters only                |
| Nyrondese <sup>3</sup>          | Primary              | Peasants and those of little education            |
| Nyrondese <sup>3</sup>          | Secondary            | Educated characters                               |
| Cold Tongue (Fruz) <sup>4</sup> | Primary              | Barbarian races                                   |
| Velondi <sup>5</sup>            | Primary              | Rural folk, peasants                              |
| Velondi <sup>5</sup>            | Secondary            | Educated characters                               |
| Keolandish <sup>6</sup>         | Primary              | Peasant to king                                   |
| Lendorian                       | Secondary            | Educated characters                               |

\*— Common is known by all adventurers, though they might not be fluent in it.

<sup>1</sup>— A mixture of Suloise and Oeridian tongues with some Baklunish admixture.

<sup>2</sup>— Oeridian tribal language.

<sup>3</sup>— High Oeridian dialect of Common.

<sup>4</sup>— Suloise with Flan admixture.

<sup>5</sup>— Oeridian tribal language.

<sup>6</sup>— Old High Oeridian with admixtures.

**Languages spoken by human occupants**

The following list presents the general locations within the WORLD OF GREYHAWK, the most common alignment(s) found therein, and a list of the languages spoken by occupants of the area. Roll d% to see which language is used by a particular character. In the "Special" category will be listed a particular tongue, if at least a 1% probability exists that the language will be spoken by a character. For regions where a "Special" language is not mentioned, the chance of such an obscure dialect being used by a character is negligible.

**The Great Kingdom (Kingdom of Aerdy):** chaotic evil, lawful evil; Oeridian 01-20, Common 21-99, Suloise 00.

**Sea Barons:** chaotic evil, chaotic neutral; Common 01-94, Oeridian 95-00.

**Lordship of the Isles:** neutral, chaotic neutral; Oeridian 01-03, Common 04-98, Suloise 99, Special 00 (Ferral).

**County of Sunndi:** lawful neutral, chaotic good; Oeridian 01-07, Common 08-99, Special 00 (Ferral).

**County of Idee:** lawful neutral; Oeridian 01-05, Common 06-98, Suloise 99, Special 00 (Ferral).

**Free City of Irongate:** lawful neutral; Oeridian 01-05, Common 06-98, Suloise 99, Special 00 (Ferral).

**Free State of Onnwal:** lawful neutral; Oeridian 01-06, Common 07-99, Special 00 (Ferral).

**Prelacy of Almor:** lawful neutral, lawful good; Oeridian 01-07, Common 08-00.

**Kingdom of Nyrond:** lawful neutral, lawful good; Oeridian 01-03, Common 04-85, Suloise 86, Special 87-00 (Nyrondese).

**Bone March:** chaotic evil; Common 01-00.

**Barony of Ratik:** neutral; Common 01-00.

**Frost Barbarians:** chaotic neutral, chaotic evil; Suloise 01-06, Common 07-60, Special 61-00 (Cold Tongue).

**Snow Barbarians:** chaotic neutral, chaotic evil; Suloise 01-05, Common 06-62, Special 63-00 (Cold Tongue).

**Ice Barbarians:** chaotic neutral, chaotic evil; Suloise 01-04, Common 05-63, Special 64-00 (Cold Tongue).

**Hold of Stonefist:** chaotic evil; Flan 01-02, Suloise 03, Common 04-99, Special 00 (Cold Tongue).

**Rovers of the Barrens:** chaotic neutral, neutral; Flan 01-20, Baklunish 21-36, Oeridian 37-46, Common 47-99, Suloise 00.

**Duchy of Tenh:** lawful neutral, neutral; Flan 01-88, Oeridian 89-90, Common 91-00.

**Theocracy of the Pale:** lawful neutral; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-05, Common 06-00.

**Bandit Kingdoms:** chaotic neutral, chaotic evil; Flan 01-13, Baklunish 14, Oeridian 15-24, Common 25-00.

**Shield Lands:** neutral good; Flan 01-02, Baklunish 03, Oeridian 04-18, Common 19-00.

**County of Urnst:** neutral, neutral good; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-07, Common 08-00.

**Duchy of Urnst:** neutral; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-03, Common 04-00.

**Greyhawk:** any; Flan 01, Baklunish 02, Suloise 03, Oeridian 04, Common 05-99, Special 00 (Velondi).

**Kingdom of Furyondy:** lawful good; Flan 01, Baklunish 02, Suloise 03, Oeridian 04-20, Common 21-85, Special 86-00 (Velondi).

**Horned Society:** lawful evil; Flan 01, Baklunish 02-04, Oeridian 05-09, Common 10-00.

**Land of Iuz:** chaotic evil; Flan 01, Baklunish 02-06, Oeridian 07, Common 08-00.

**Wolf Nomads:** neutral, chaotic neutral; Baklunish 01-35, Oeridian 36-80, Common 81-00.

**Tiger Nomads:** neutral, chaotic neutral; Baklunish 01-40, Oeridian 41-85, Common 86-00.

**Caliphate of Ekbir:** lawful neutral; Baklunish 01-47, Oeridian 48-53, Common 54-00.

**Tusmit:** neutral; Baklunish 01-12, Oeridian 13-27, Common 28-00.

**Sultanate of Zeif:** lawful neutral; Baklunish 01-79, Oeridian 80-94, Common 95-00.

**Plains of the Paynims:** chaotic neutral; Baklunish 01-92, Oeridian 93-97, Common 98-00.

**Ull:** chaotic neutral; Baklunish 01-30, Oeridian 31-51, Common 52-00.

**Ket:** chaotic neutral; Baklunish 01-49, Oeridian 50-61, Common 62-00.

**Perrenland:** lawful neutral, neutral; Flan 01-49, Baklunish 50-57, Oeridian 58-65, Common 66-00.

**Independent Town of Highfolk:** neutral, chaotic good; Oeridian 01-07, Common 08-00.

**Archclericy of Veluna:** lawful good; Suloise 01, Oeridian 02-24, Common 25-88, Special 89-00 (Velondi).

**March of Bissel:** neutral good; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-19, Common 20-00.

**Gran March:** lawful neutral; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-17, Suloise 18, Common 19-98, Special 99-00 (Keolandish).

**Valley of the Mage:** lawful neutral; Flan 01-02, Oeridian 03-04, Common 05-00.

**Duchy of Geoff:** chaotic good; Flan 01-50, Oeridian 51-57, Common 58-00.

**Earldom of Sterich:** chaotic good; Flan 01-12, Oeridian 13-60, Common 61-90, Special 91-00 (Keolandish).

**Yeomanry:** lawful good; Flan 01, Suloise 02-04, Common 05-00.

**Hold of the Sea Princes:** chaotic neutral, chaotic evil; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-17, Suloise 18, Common 19-00.

**Kingdom of Keoland:** chaotic good, neutral good; Flan 01-02,

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Oeridian 03-12, Suloise 13, Common 14-80, Special 81-00 (Keolandish).

**Tri-States of Ulek:** neutral good, neutral; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-11, Suloise 12, Common 13-90, Special 91-00 (Keolandish).

**Kingdom of Celene:** chaotic good; Oeridian 01-02, Common 03-00.

**Wild Coast:** any; Flan 01, Oeridian 02-09, Suloise 10, Common 11-00.

**The Pomarj:** chaotic evil, lawful evil; Oeridian 01-06, Suloise 07, Common 08-00.

**The Scarlet Brotherhood:** lawful evil; Suloise 01-05, Common 06-00.

**Spindrift Isles:** lawful neutral; Suloise 01-02, Common 03-75, Special 76-00 (Lendorian).

## Notes on Special languages

In most cases, a "special" language generated from the list above is simply a dialect of one of the more popular languages. However, those who speak a dialect will not always automatically understand someone who speaks the native tongue or another dialect of the native tongue.

Intelligence is the factor which determines whether a character can understand someone else who is speaking a related language. The chance of a character's understanding is equal to that character's intelligence times 6% (note exception below under The Cold Tongue). Missing the desired percentage by 1-20 will yield partial, incomplete understanding, and missing the desired percentage by 21 or more means that the character cannot understand a word the other character is saying. Note that this "chance to understand" roll only applies to characters whose languages are related.

Example: A party member with an intelligence of 14 speaks fluent Common. He comes upon a figure who speaks only Nyronese, a dialect of Common. There is a chance of  $14 \times 6\% = 84\%$  that the party member will understand the other member. If an 85 or higher is rolled, it means the party member will be able to communicate somewhat, but will not fully perceive the other speaker's thoughts and intentions through speech alone. In this case, since the party member's intelligence was sufficiently high, there is no chance of him being totally in the dark. Note that under normal circumstances, it is impossible for a character of 17 or higher to fail to understand someone speaking a related language ( $17 \times 6\% = 102\%$ ).

If the Nyronder in the above example has an intelligence of 11, there is a 66% chance he will understand the party member. There will be incomplete understanding on a roll of 67-86, and no verbal understanding will be possible if the roll is 87 or higher. This roll should only be made once for each particular pair of characters.

Following are descriptions of each of the special languages, including an indication of which languages they have no rela-

tion to, as well as related languages which might allow for understanding between speakers.

**Ferral:** Originally of Oeridian derivation, this is now a secret language spoken only by officials of the Iron League. These officials include high-ranking fighters, clerics, and other persons in a position of authority. Ferral is used only for command and identification purposes, and is never a primary language. It can be understood by those speaking Oeridian.

**Nyronese:** This is little more than a dialect of Common which is spoken by residents in some locales of Nyron. It is a primary language particularly for peasants, shopkeepers and the like. Learned persons almost always speak Common as well. It can be understood by those who speak Common or Oeridian.

**The Cold Tongue:** Also called "Fruz," this language is a dialect of Suloise. It is commonly spoken as a primary language among the Ice, Snow and Frost Barbarians. It has no relation to Common, and even those speaking Suloise find it difficult to understand (use intelligence  $\times 4\%$  instead of 6% in this case only). It can only be understood by those who speak Suloise or Flan.

**Velondi:** This is a dialect of Old Oeridian spoken primarily in Veluna and Fyryondy. It is the primary language of rural folk on the common border between the two countries. Those who speak Common cannot comprehend it at all, but it can be understood by those who speak Oeridian.

**Keolandish:** This is a widespread dialect of Old High Oeridian which is a primary language for those of the area in which it is spoken (Keoland and the surrounding lands). It is old (400+ years) and established; however, learned persons will usually speak Common and/or Old Oeridian as well. It can be understood by those who speak Common or Oeridian.

**Lendorian:** This is an obscure dialect of Suloise. It has no relation whatsoever to Fruz (The Cold Tongue). It is, in all cases, a second language for those who speak Common. Only characters with an intelligence of 9 or higher can learn Lendorian, and it can only be understood by those who speak Suloise or Common.

## Number of languages known

Generally, whether a character can know one or more languages depends on the character's intelligence. There is one universal rule: Every character knows at least a bit of the Common tongue, even if it is not that character's primary language. A character who rolls a language other than Common as a primary language will still have the ability to communicate in Common to some degree, and Common will be treated as an "additional language" even if the character's intelligence would not normally allow for the knowledge of an additional language. The degree of fluency in Common does vary according to intelligence, however; a character with intelligence of 7 or less would have at

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best a rudimentary knowledge of Common as a secondary language.

Characters with intelligence of 3-6 are able to speak a given language. They might know how to read and write very simple words in their primary language only. The chance to be able to read and write a primary language is equal to intelligence x 12% (roll separately for reading and writing), so that a character with intelligence of 9 or higher will automatically have the ability to read and write. The chance of being able to read and write a secondary language is equal to intelligence x 3% (again, roll separately for each ability).

Characters with intelligence of 7 or less will speak no other language besides Common, if that is their primary tongue.

Characters with intelligence of 8 or more can speak one additional language, over and above the primary tongue. Up to seven additional languages are permitted (for a figure of 18 intelligence; see AD&D Players Handbook, page 10). These additional languages can be determined by using the table on page 102 of the Dungeon Masters Guide, with the lists given herein aiding in the selection of a "Human foreign or other" language. Common is considered an "additional language" for all who do not use it as a primary tongue.

To determine whether an additional language is known by a character at this point in time, multiply 13% times the number of "possible additional languages" of the character (PH, page 10) as indicated by the character's intelligence. If the desired number or less is generated, a character can have a secondary language at the present time. Make a new roll for each attempt to know a secondary language, until a roll fails or until a character has used his maximum number of possibilities. Optional: Add 2% to the chance to know a secondary language for each level of experience after first level, up to a maximum bonus of 20%.

Example: A character with an intelligence of 15 may be able to speak as many as four languages in addition to the primary

language. For this example, the character's place of birth is Urnst and his primary language is Common. His chance to know any secondary language at this time is equal to  $13\% \times 4$ , or 52%. If a result of 01-52 is obtained on a dice roll, the figure will speak one additional language and then may roll again, seeking to again roll 01-52 and obtain a second additional language. The process is repeated until a result of 53-00 is rolled (which could be on the first attempt), or until the character has obtained as many additional languages as possible.

Those characters who don't know as many additional languages as they possibly could will have the opportunity to learn them at a later point in the character's adventuring career. Learning a language amounts to quite a bit more than simply sitting around the campfire and memorizing a few more words each night. Learning requires continual, almost constant use of the new language, which is best accomplished in the company of others who speak and write the language fluently, or through the employment of an instructor.

A learning process like this will take a minimum of two months of solid work on the character's part, during which time NO adventuring may be undertaken by the character. At the end of two months, roll once to see if fluency has been attained (using the same percentage as was originally applicable; i.e., 52% in the above example). Failure means that one more month of study must be undertaken before another try for fluency can be made.

(Optional: Additional study, if needed, must be undertaken immediately, with no lapse between the first two months and the next one, in order to test for fluency without penalty. For every lapse in learning of one week, the chance for fluency is reduced by 5% the next time such a check is made. For example, if the character described above failed on his initial roll to know an additional language after taking two months of training, he could train for another month right away and check again at the same percentage chance (52%). However, if he takes a week off

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between the first two months and the next month of training, the next check for fluency would be made at 47%. Note that the 5% penalty applies only to the chance to know the particular language for which training was taken. If a character wishes to begin instruction in a different language, checks for fluency after the training period would be at 52% as usual.)

### Languages for demi-humans and humanoids

The AD&D Players Handbook lists basic languages for demi-humans and humanoids, and more language information for humanoids is found in the Monster Manual. As with humans, the intelligence of a demi-human or humanoid character has a bearing on which languages he can know—and, as with humans, all adventurer demi-humans will have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Common.

To more closely conform with the rest of this system, the strictures given in the Players Handbook on which languages (and how many) a demi-human can know should be altered according to the following specifications and restrictions. Notes which follow the listing of the demi-human races will give reasons for the differences which are outlined.

**Dwarves** will always speak dwarven and Common. It is possible for a dwarf to know gnome, goblin, kobold and orcish as additional languages, with a percentage chance of knowing each one equal to intelligence x 5%, or intelligence x 8% if proximity is a factor. A dwarf may know up to two additional languages regardless of intelligence.

**Elves** will always know elvish and Common. Possible additional languages include gnome, halfling, goblin, hobgoblin, orcish and gnoll, with the chance of knowing any one equal to intelligence x 5% (or x 8% for proximity). Elves with intelligence of 16-18 may roll for additional languages on the table on page 102 of the DMG, ignoring a roll if it produces a language already known but counting it if it produces a language which has been attempted and failed. The chance of knowing any language generated from that chart would be 80% for an elf of intelligence 16, 85% for intelligence 17 and 90% for intelligence 18.

**Gnomes** will always know gnome and Common, and have the ability to communicate with burrowing animals as described in the Players Handbook. A gnome has a chance of intelligence x 5% to know dwarven, halfling, goblin, kobold, or 1-2 languages from the table on page 102 of the DMG, with the same 8% provision for proximity. The proximity rule would also apply to local human tongues. (Note that a gnome is not necessarily limited to two additional languages, as per the PH.)

**Half-elves** will always know Common, and will know elvish if raised by one or more elves. Additional languages possible — only for a character raised by one or more elves — (intelligence x 5%, or 8% for proximity) include gnome, halfling, goblin, hobgoblin, orcish and gnoll. Half-elves of intelligence 17 have an 85% chance to know 1 language from page 102 of the DMG, and those of intelligence 18 have a 90% chance to know up to two languages from that table.

**Halflings** will always know halfling and Common. Possible additional languages include dwarven, gnome, goblin, orcish, and 1-2 additional languages (page 102, DMG) for those of intelligence 17 or higher. The proximity rule of intelligence x 8% applies in all cases except proximity to gnomes, which uses a figure of intelligence x 10% instead.

**Half-orcs** will always know Common, and will know orcish if raised by one or more orcs. Possible additional languages include hobgoblin, goblin, gnoll and kobold, at a chance of intelligence x 5%. The bonus for proximity does not apply to half-orcs. Those of intelligence 16 or 17 may learn 1-2 additional languages (page 102, DMG) at chances of 80% and 85% respectively.

The changes in this procedure from that outlined in the Players Handbook are designed primarily to account for an individual character's background and intelligence. Instead of auto-

matically knowing certain languages in addition to Common and the racial tongue, characters must check against their intelligence to see if they know any additional ones. Also, it is not automatic for a half-elf or half-orc to know elvish or orcish, respectively. Only characters who were raised in a group/family with at least one member of the non-human race can possibly know that racial language in addition to Common.

The basic chance to know any of the other racial languages is enhanced for characters who were brought up by members of one race in proximity to a group of another race. This proximity bonus applies between races that are non-hostile toward each other (elves vs. gnomes, for example), but no proximity bonus is used between races that oppose each other (elves vs. orcs).

It is entirely possible that a demi-human who was brought up by humans only would not be able to learn all of the racial tongues listed as possible for that demi-human type. Also, characters raised in towns will have a smaller chance of being able to know the various racial languages than characters raised in a rural area or the wilderness.

Using the base chance of intelligence x 5% (or more for proximity), a roll should be made for each character for each racial language listed. Even if one or more of the dice rolls results in failure, it is still possible to succeed in knowing another racial language. This is different from the system used for humans, where failure on a roll for a secondary language means that no further attempts may be made without undergoing a learning process.

## APPENDIX by E. Gary Gygax

### Racial types of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK fantasy setting

**Baklunish:** The Baklunish people have golden-hued skin tones. Their eyes run from gray to green, although brown is most common. Their hair color runs from brown to black. Variance is by tribe and nation.

**Flannae:** The Flannae have bronze-colored skin. Although some are more coppery, numbers of them are very dark bronze (deep brown). Eye color tends to brown or black, although some have a pale amber eye coloration. Hair tends to be dark brown or black.

**Oeridians:** The Oeridians are tan- to olive-skinned. Some tribes are on the fairer side, while others are rather dark. Their eye color tends to vary to any shade. Hair color runs from dark blonde to black, but the most common hair color is brown or reddish brown.

**Suloise:** The Suloise are very fair-skinned people. Although some are less fair than others, many are nearly albino. These people have pale blue eyes, very blonde or platinum-colored hair. The less fair have normal white skin, blonde or light red hair, and gray or blue eyes.

The inner mixture of Oeridians with Suloise tends toward a typical European-mix looking population. However, the original Flannae stock shows up fairly commonly in just about any society, so that there will be light-bronze to deep-bronze folk intermingled in most populations.

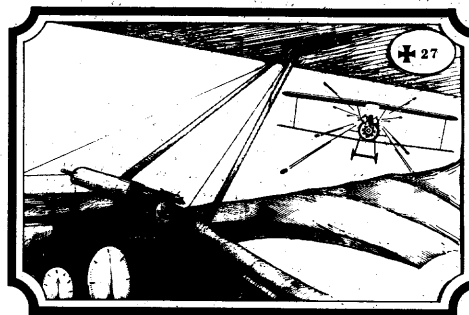
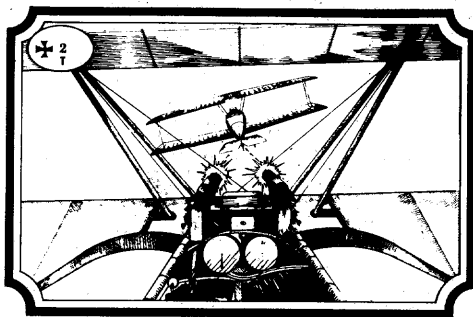
The mix of Oeridian and Baklunish brings a fairly light skin — a real yellowish cast, rather than the vague yellow of the oriental human.

A cross of Baklunish and Flannae yields a golden-copper skin color.

In general, the skin color of an individual makes no difference in many places, although the nobles of the Great Kingdom are very jealous of being light-skinned, just as the rulers of the Duchy of Tenh are conscious of the supposed superiority of their bronze color. In the central south region, from Greyhawk to the Duchy of Geoff, there is little heed paid to skin color, just as there is little heed paid to absolute racial type, i.e. human or demi-human, except perhaps by demi-humans who sometimes feel superior to humans.

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# The undercover job guide

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Comparatively few spies freely admit their actual profession. An abruptly shortened life expectancy, of course, is an excellent reason for this reticence. Only a small number of agents have reached the point in their careers where an encounter with a member of the opposition is more likely to shorten the other person's three score and ten, and thus they no longer give a rip: James Bond comes to mind. Not that he advertises his job as an agent; he just doesn't bother to conceal it, other than the somewhat misleading use of his military rank and (occasionally) a uniform.

Quite aside from matters of mortality, there is another excellent reason to indulge in some deception about one's occupation: A spy's effectiveness is likely to be reduced (to say the least) if his passport lists his profession as "saboteur" or "assassin." Therefore, most agents prefer to appear to hold reasonably (or comparatively) mundane jobs in order to not be noticed.

The treatment of "cover" occupations in the TOP SECRET™ game rules is somewhat superficial. Those who want this aspect of an agent's life to be further emphasized can consider the following suggestions.

Such a job should pay fairly well, so that the agent may support him/herself despite extended periods of "sick leave"; it should exist in a reasonably unstructured or flexible environment, so that such periods of leave are possible; and ideally it should allow ample opportunity for travel in the course of normal job-related events.

The job should make ample use of the agent's actual abilities and training, so that the agent cannot be caught "out of character" during casual questioning or conversation.

To get down to the numbers: An agent's career classification is determined by a throw of percentile dice, reading the results as follows.

A roll of 01-10 indicates that the agent is known to be an inactive member of the armed forces; connection with his agency is unknown.

A roll of 11-30 indicates that the agent is known to be employed by his agency (if the agency's existence is common knowledge), or by an unspecified government agency (if the agency is secret); however, the agent is believed to be simply a minor bureaucrat in that agency.

A roll of 31-00 indicates that the agent routinely operates with an undercover profession, exhibiting no overt, public contact with his government/agency beyond that which an ordinary citizen would have.

The agent's exact undercover profession should be chosen based on the agent's high score in his AOK, modified by the usefulness to his agency of that skill as it applies to the specific job. The travel potential of a skill or ability, for instance, has a great bearing on the agent's usefulness to the agency as a member of a profession which makes use of that ability.

Following are listed the Areas of Knowledge for the TOP SECRET game, the travel potential for each one, a typical starting salary for a person with that knowledge, and an example or two of a particular profession likely to be associated with that AOK. In addition, similar information is appended for inactive military personnel and bureaucratic employees, the first two types of career classifications which were defined above.

**Agriculture, Animal Science:** low travel potential; starting salary \$15,000/yr; consultant for national or supranational organization (such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the UN's WHO).

**Architecture:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$20,000/yr (variable); free-lance architect.

**Arts & Crafts:** travel potential very low to nonexistent; starting salary \$12,000/yr (variable); various craft jobs and trades, in the very unlikely event of an agent choosing this field for a profession.

**Astronomy/Space Science:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$18,000/yr; research scientist or university-level teacher.

**Biology/Biochemistry:** travel potential moderate; starting salary \$18,000/yr; research scientist or university-level teacher.

**Botany:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$18,000/yr; teacher. (possible exceptional case: unknown or independent source of funds, typically \$20,000/yr, and agent would be noted grower of exotic plants; travel potential moderate to high.

**Chemistry:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$18,000/yr; research scientist, university-level teacher, or private-industry employee.

**Computer Science:** travel potential low to moderate, sometimes high for expert troubleshooter; starting salary \$25,000/yr; programmer or troubleshooter.

**Ecology/Earth Sciences:** travel potential moderate; starting salary \$18,000/yr; university-level teacher.

**Economics/Finance:** travel potential moderate; starting salary \$25,000/yr; accountant, financial advisor or speculator.

**Education/Indoctrination:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$18,000/yr; teacher, lecturer or public relations representative.

**Engineering, Aeronautical:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$25,000/yr; aircraft designer or troubleshooter, possibly spacecraft designer.

**Engineering, Construction/Civil:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$22,000/yr; engineer for private industry.

**Engineering, Electrical:** see Engineering, Construction/Civil.

**Engineering, Hydraulic:** see Engineering, Construction/Civil.

**Engineering, Industrial:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$24,000/yr; designer or troubleshooter for major works of private industry, sometimes project manager or plant foreman.

**Engineering, Mechanical:** see Engineering, Construction/Civil.

**Engineering, Transportation:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$22,000/yr; advisor to government at various level, occasionally project overseer or troubleshooter.

**Fine Arts:** travel potential high; starting salary quite variable; possibly painter or sculptor or the like, but more likely (for agents) to be an actor/actress or entertainer.

**Geography:** travel potential high; starting salary \$16,000/yr; surveyor for private industry, geographical analyst, or employee of government mapping service.

**Geology:** travel potential high; starting salary \$18,000/yr; location and analysis of resources for industry or government.

**Home Economics:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$20,000/year (variable); almost no connection with what the field is normally thought of to include: agents in this field will very likely be chefs, or connected with the creation of fashion or decoration: female agents have a good chance of being models (salary quite variable).

**Law:** travel potential moderate; starting salary \$25,000/yr; lawyer for industry, private citizens or government.

**Literature:** travel potential high; starting salary quite variable; author or (possibly) critic.

**Mathematics/Accounting:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$25,000/yr; accountant or statistician, possibly teacher (at lower salary, \$18,000/year). At high levels of achieve-

ment, corporate administrators and executives, salary 1-10 times higher, travel potential high; this last category should be reserved for those with an AOK score of 130+.

**Medicine/Physiology:** travel potential moderate; starting salary \$25,000/yr (variable); doctor or surgeon.

**Metallurgy:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$22,000/yr; engineer.

**Military Science/Weaponry:** travel potential high; starting salary \$16,000/yr; soldier, possibly mercenary, possibly on inactive status; agents will tend to be officers.

**Photography:** travel potential high; starting salary quite variable; free-lance photographer or artist-photographer, possibly fashion or advertising photographer, possibly employee of newspaper ("Hi there, my name's Jimmy Olson...").

**Physical Education:** travel potential high; starting salary quite variable; almost certainly an agent will be an athlete in this AOK: by preference, one in a sport played throughout much of the world. Tennis is an excellent choice; golf, soccer and track & field are also good.

**Physics:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$18,000/yr; research scientist or university teacher.

**Political Science/Ideology:** travel potential high; salary quite variable; many possibilities, including lecturer, politician, diplomat, ambassador, teacher or government advisor.

**Psychology:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$25,000/yr; researcher, teacher, or practicing psychiatrist.

**Religion:** travel potential low to moderate; starting salary \$15,000/yr; church official or teacher of theology; low probability of agents choosing this field, but not impossible (see the James Bond tale "Moonraker").

**Social Sciences:** travel potential low; starting salary \$18,000/yr; teacher, or possibly sociological advisor to government.

**World History/Current Affairs:** travel potential moderate to high; starting salary \$18,000/yr (variable); teacher, lecturer or advisor to government, possibly politician.

**(Special) Inactive member of military, attached to agency:** see Military Science/Weaponry; agent will always be an officer, frequently of command (usually not field or flag) rank. Examples: Colonel Steve Austin, Commander James Bond, Major John Smith ("Where Eagles Dare"). Exceptions (from either extreme): Lieutenant Morris Schaffer ("Where Eagles Dare"), Corporal "Dusty" Miller ("The Guns of Navarone"), Admiral Sir Miles Messervy ("M").

**(Special) Known employee of agency:** agent is civil servant; travel potential high; starting salary starting \$12,000/yr, with increases to \$20,000/yr (hazardous duty pay) during missions, prorated over duration of mission.

### Income, coming and going

The base starting salary given should be increased by 5% for each point of knowledge in excess of 100 (and reduced the same amount for each point below 100; agents should have at least a 100 score to seriously consider an AOK as the basis for a profession), and increased another 5% for each year of age over 24 (no penalty for being under that age). Salary is generally paid on a monthly basis. Not all of it is available to the agent as unrestricted spending money; most of an agent's salary must be spent on upkeep, either of the agent — or the agent's government.

Off the top come taxes. The basic tax rate is 25% of gross income; to this rate add 3% for each \$10,000 or fraction thereof by which the agent's earnings exceed \$10,000. This is (very approximately) the situation in the United States as of this writing; the tax rate varies greatly (usually upwards) throughout the rest of the world.

Of the remainder of the agent's salary, most will go to routine upkeep. The amount needed for upkeep of the agent at a normal standard of living for the agent's alleged profession is 75% of the agent's (after taxes) yearly earnings in the cover profession. His

actual job earnings are likely to be lower than the yearly salary rate over the course of each year, because of the extended leave periods needed for agency missions; however, bonuses from his agency and an agent's ingenuity should make up for the difference.

The amount necessary to spend for upkeep may be reduced for an agent who chooses, or feels forced, to live in less comfort. The amount spent on upkeep may be exceeded by as much extra money as an agent wishes to apply to it; however, either of those courses of action may, if carried to the extreme, draw undue public attention to the agent. The upkeep amount includes room, board and minor purchases; it does not include major purchases such as cars.

At the start of an agent's career, before he has earned any of his salary, the agent will have available funds equal to 10% of the normal yearly income for the agent's profession, plus 1% for each year of age over 20.

Care must be exercised by the administrator to insure that the agent's money is expended in a realistic manner. Not all of the agent's "upkeep" funds may be spent on weaponry and equipment, for example. For one thing, it would be conspicuous; for another, no human being can survive long (without being incarcerated or institutionalized) if he doesn't make his own provisions for obtaining food, clothing, and shelter.

While upkeep expenses include a minimum working wardrobe, special purchases may sometimes have to be made. If an agent must jump into a river while fully attired, his clothes will in all probability be ruined, and will require replacement.

Human nature being what it is, a high-salaried agent will have to spend a lot of money on physical evidence of his stature to avoid undue attention, while a low-salaried one can't do a lot of conspicuous consuming. While an agent with an avowed income of \$12,000 a year might reasonably utilize an old VW bug for transportation (and might, in fact, be assumed to start with such a vehicle), a character with an avowed income of \$90,000 will have to purchase more than one car; probably two or three cars, of the sort where a high price tag is its own end.

Players should be encouraged to develop ways for their agents to spend "extra" money: hobbies, collections, or an active social life. A habit of frequenting discos, preferably with a companion who has expensive tastes, for example, not only enhances the characterization of the agent, but also provides an excellent way of disposing of excess money.

And then there is always hospital expenses...

### Specify, specify

The players should be required to define their jobs much more closely than the AOKs would simply suggest. It is not enough to claim to be "in fine arts" as a profession; the character must be specified, for example, to be a moderately well known actor in adventure movies (such as Simon Templar). This not only builds characterization, but makes a firm foundation for scenarios.

A "variable" salary is one which may be greater or less than the stated value by as much as 50%. Roll 1d10: 1-3 is low; 4-7 is as stated; 8-10 is high. The amount of variance is 1d10 times 5%.

A "quite variable" salary is one which varies wildly from individual to individual, and from year to year. One way of determining it is to roll once each year: 1d100 times \$1,000. This amount may be disbursed in one lump sum, incrementally on a monthly basis, or in irregular pieces at odd times chosen by the game referee. It should also be adjusted to fit with the agent's cover; a "minor supporting actor" would be probably not earn more than \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year; a top-ranked tennis pro probably would earn less than that amount.

As a last word on this open-ended subject, players should be encouraged to go outside the AOK list and find other jobs for their characters to work at, the details to be arranged by the player and the referee.

Someone might even choose to become a traveling greeting-card salesman...



YOU NOTICE LITTLE THINGS, WAITING FOR DOORS TO OPEN.  
 LIKE A PRECISE, CHAIN—LINK FENCE AROUND A NEATLY TRIMMED  
 YARD THAT IS **HUGE** BY NEW YORK CITY STANDARDS.  
 LIKE THE EARLY EVENING QUIET OF A SHADY SIDE STREET THAT  
 SEEMS OUT OF PLACE JUST A FEW HUNDRED YARDS OFF BROADWAY.  
 LIKE THE DARK AMBIENCE OF THE BROODING PORCH ON AN  
 OTHERWISE NONDESCRIPT VICTORIAN HOME.

AND THAT NAMEPLATE BY THE DOOR — FLOWING  
 LETTERS MAYBE AN INCH OR SO HIGH: **VALLEJO**.  
 THINK OF AN ARTIST, OR ANYONE WITH A DEGREE OF NOTORIETY,  
 FOR THAT MATTER, AND A **LAST** NAME COMES TO MIND.

BUT NOT ON THIS FRONT PORCH A HALF—HOUR FROM MANHATTAN.  
 THE DARK—SKINNED MAN WHO OPENS THE DOOR IS KNOWN BY HIS  
**FIRST** NAME, THE DISTINCTIVE SIGNATURE  
 IN THE CORNER OF HIS PAINTINGS:

# BORIS

STORY AND PHOTOS  
 BY BRYCE KNORR

**H**e doesn't *look* like a typical "Boris." And, he doesn't *look* like *Boris* — at least not like the image projected by his paintings and the bits and pieces of his public reputation.

His name is easy to explain: It comes from his Spanish-born father's love of Russian literature. As for his appearance, he certainly doesn't *look* like *Boris* when he comes to the door dressed not in a loincloth, but in slacks and a knit shirt. No blood-soiled sword. No beautiful woman clinging to his thighs. Not battling some embodiment of evil, but finishing a late supper. His face reflects too much good nature, his demeanor is too pleasant to be those of some macho body builder who poses as the hero of his own pictures.

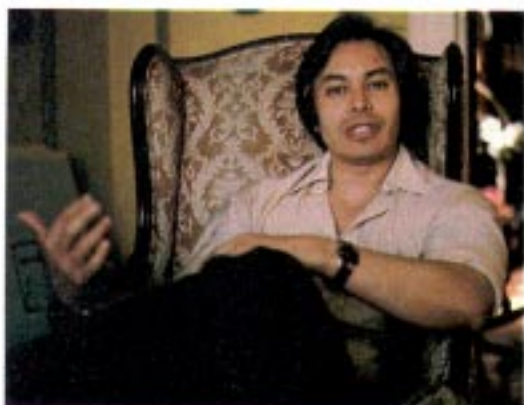
When he models, Boris is quick to point out, he is acting. And,

he doesn't have the incentive of the young man to condition his frame. His biceps still surge with the bulk of years of weightlifting — but other bulges on his compact frame come from not enough, rather than too much, exercise.

"As I get older, I get lazier," he says with disarming candor, settled into a living-room easy chair.

Still, except for streaks of grey in the coarse black hair that drapes his ears, he hardly looks like a man who observed his 40th birthday earlier this year.

And, while his appearance at first may fail to conform to his moniker, in some respects he is very much *Boris*: proud, individualistic, romantic and a list of other adjectives, most of which find expression in his paintings.



*Boris Vallejo: in the foyer of his New York City home and discussing his art and his life.*

Given the style and subject matter that made him a sought-after fantasy artist, it would be easy to categorize Boris with references to his Latin background: "17 years after he came to the United States from Lima, Peru, his English is correct, but tinged with an engaging accent...." But, when the question of cultural influences is raised, he responds with a touch of bewilderment, or perhaps it is a slight annoyance: Others have attempted similar analysis, and left him unconvinced as to its validity.

"There was a young woman from Cuba that was writing a paper on artists, and she wanted to call that the main theme of her thesis, or whatever she was writing — the Latin background to my approach to painting, and I told her exactly the same thing: As far as I know, there is none. And she said, 'It's subliminal.' Maybe it is, I don't know. I certainly don't do it consciously."

Both Boris and the young woman may be correct. Although he may not *feel* macho, he may *seem* that way to the dominant Anglo culture of 20th-century America. Boris may be bearing the cultural burden imposed by a society with a different orientation — he would not be, for example, the first male with a Hispanic background to be stereotyped in this way.

The public also sees only his pictures and does not often hear his words. Although he (like many artists) does not easily articulate his thoughts, he nonetheless is a man of words. In a series of recent interviews, he emerged as an intensely professional artist whose career is in transition; as an ambitious man who is still somewhat fatalistic about his future; and as a public figure, who is more than a little bit aware that "success" flows from more than just ability.

I consider myself very much an individual," he says. "I do what I want to do and I do it, you know, whether it is really establishment or anti-establishment, and that's how I feel. If it's not right for me, I don't do it."

"There are certain things in my character. I've been accused a number of times of being a typical *macho*, which I must say I don't see. I think it has more to do with the way I do things, than what I really am."

The way he does his *things*, of course, has made his work immediately distinctive to his legions of fans — as well as to more than an occasional detractor. The scores of science-fiction and fantasy book covers, posters and calendars he created in the 1970s is a body of work that is distinct and recognizable: muted backgrounds dominated by one or two figures made imposing by rippling muscles or barely clad beauty.

Macho or not, Vallejo does have an affection for the human form. And his affinity has dominated his work. He can draw landscapes, but beautiful vistas bore him. He can draw clothing, but he sees even the most gorgeous silks and raiments as obscuring something even more gorgeous.

"I love the human body as it is. As far as I'm concerned, it's not to be covered with cloth. As a matter of fact, it bores me to do clothing. You know, you can push yourself, force yourself to do (it), but that's not me. I like to do bodies, just bodies."

"I can do a landscape with my eyes closed. It's just — other

people don't feel that way, but to me there is no joy to doing landscapes — it's background."

As for the source for this attraction, perhaps it comes from medical studies, perhaps from years of body building to strengthen the frame of a spindly youth. If a deeper reason exists, he does not dwell on it, saying only, "I don't know why. I think it's part of my nature."

"Why?" he asks rhetorically when the question is pressed "I don't know, I've never gone really any further than, than the fact that I like the human body, and you know, visually, I really enjoy almost equally as much a well developed body of a male as that of a female."

In recent months one body has come to dominate his work, that of a woman who is replacing the male heroes who have tended to be the focus of his fantasy book covers. His model for this issue of DRAGON™ magazine, she has posed for Boris for four years, in which time his career has begun to move from

book covers to other fantasy formats. Stacked against the wall by a fireplace in his living room are more than two dozen boards, mostly of her, paintings that represent Boris' next major project, a book of erotica that represents a new direction, a departure from the restraints — both technical and censorship, of book covers.

Titled *Mirages*, the book is scheduled to consist of 33 paintings, accompanied by poetry written by his wife, Doris, whose first novel, a science-fiction tale called *Windsound*, was published this spring.

Besides the big-book advantages of better printing and a better format for display than paperback covers, *Mirages* has allowed Boris to explore more explicit themes than allowed by the constraints imposed by publishing houses that often wish to use *some* sex — enough to attract the eye on a crowded bookstore rack, but not enough to require brown wrapping paper.

Most of the *Mirages* paintings follow a beauty-and-the-beast theme — a humanoid creature, with a lover that is, well, usually something other than humanoid.

"The book that was published of my work (*The Fantastic Art of Boris Vallejo*) and the calendars, the posters, have been really things that were commissioned for mostly book

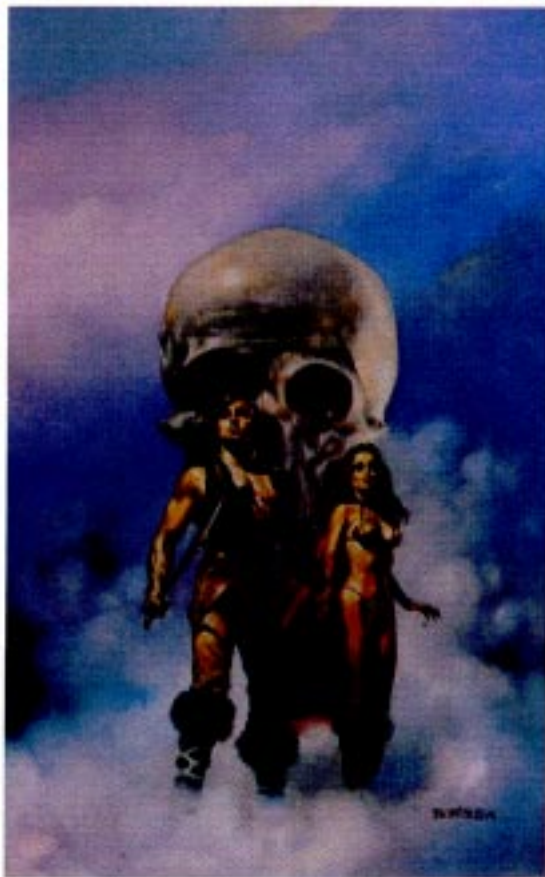
covers, and of course in book covers you illustrate what the book is about. This particular book is totally my concept. I have no limitations as to what to do or how to do it.

"For one thing, I have always loved to draw the human figure, and doing fantasy book covers, you always run into problems with censorship, where you have to cut something, or you can't show a nipple, and so on. I love the human body as it is. As far as I'm concerned, it's not to be covered with cloth."

Scant clothing certainly is a hallmark of the works for *Mirages* Boris has completed thus far. Yet the paintings are hardly hardcore. No explicit sex is depicted; as a whole, the effort is decidedly soft-core.

The top board shows a rear view of the woman ("I love to draw behinds"), dressed in high black boots and a leather jacket, holding a dinosaurish-looking creature on a leash. Unlike some of the women on his covers, this woman is no supplicant, is in no need of aid from a musclebound John Carter, Tarzan or Conan.

"As a rule, the women I portray are not defenseless," Boris



*The Magic Goes A way (1978)*



says. "You have that woman," he says with a glance to the 36 x 24 board. "This is a very strong-looking woman. I mean, she is in control. While women's lib could object perhaps to the nudity, you know, the exploitation of the body of a woman, they are right, but if someone wants to exploit my body, that's fine with me, too, you know? I have no objections to that. It is not offensive to me, it is very acceptable."

"I like a very feminine woman that at the same time is very capable."

As for the cowering beauties on some of his older works, those, he says, were probably dictated by the subject matter of the book or the publisher. "That's not really my doing, that's what they want."

Which, after all, is one reason why *Mirages* came to be created.

Quickly rummaging through the boards, he finds his favorite, of a vampire-creature embracing the woman, who is again viewed from behind. He casts an affectionate glance again at the painting, and sighs, "Yeah, I like backsides," pronouncing it "bocksides."

The creature's tight embrace about the woman's buttocks has drawn a thin trickle of blood.

"I think it is a very tender painting, because the creature — he is a very threatening creature, but he is very gentle also. He's a very frightening creature, but he's obviously very much in love with her."

"I certainly don't consider these paintings pornographic. There is a difference, you know, between pornography and erotica. Now you ask me, what is the difference, I'd have to think about it."

Whatever the definitions, however, Boris says he doesn't object to pornography or depictions of explicit sex. "As a matter of fact I enjoy it, but within myself, I don't feel it."

The distinction may have something to do with biology vs. art, photographic fact vs. interpretation; graphic sex vs. the mere *implication* of the erotic.

"There is a beauty in the human body that I would really refuse to destroy," he says. "If I am to get explicit about it — I would say graphic about it — while I may enjoy a woman with her legs spread, you know, on a personal basis, as far as a painting goes, I would not find it very aesthetic."

Despite the relative tameness of his work, even in a society that has grown used to adult book stores and X-rated cinemas and titillating television, he still encounters hostility, against which he says he offers no defense.

"I don't bother, really. Even before these paintings, even the things I was doing before — barbarians or whatever — people ask me, 'Well, how do you feel about doing pornography?' Pornography? Pornography? I don't know. When I do it, I'll tell you. I haven't done it, so I don't know."

"But there are people that are going to make their own interpretation of these (*Mirages* paintings). Certainly, it's not in my mind, it's in their mind, so I really don't bother with it."

He recalls a woman who, after complimenting him on his technique, urged him to switch to landscapes.

"She objected to the nature of the human body. That's not my problem. I do what I like to do and I wouldn't do something that I don't feel comfortable with. I wouldn't. I really wouldn't do it. For money or anything, I really wouldn't do it. But I love the human body. I don't think there's anything wrong with showing a pair of tits, you know, or pubic hair or anything like that. I certainly see nothing wrong with that whatsoever."

Born as a series of five sketches two years ago, *Mirages* has been far from an easy project to complete. Besides the demands of other works, he says he didn't get started on *Mirages* as soon as he should have. First scheduled for release in the fall of 1980, the book was originally delayed a year. Boris completed half the paintings in the first 18 months, then set aside outside commissions for six months to finish the series. Confronted with self-generated pressure to make these the *best* work of his career, he says, "I got so hung up I didn't work for about three months — I didn't work on *anything*."

Finally, in an intense three-month period this spring, he finished all but three of the paintings, before publication was again delayed, this time until the fall of 1982.

"As a rule I like to work on one thing at a time," he says. "In this case, of course, my deadline was rather long and I could afford to do it leisurely — or I thought I could — so as it happened I was a year late," he adds, with a self-deprecating little chuckle.



*The Maker Of Universes (1976)*

**A**lthough only three paintings remain to complete the *Mirages* cycle, just when they will join the other boards in his living room is uncertain. Lack of a market is not the culprit: *The Fantastic Art* is in its fourth printing and there seems to be serious interest about *Mirages*. Rather, the opposite appears to be true of Boris' attraction to the fantasy-buying public. Boris, simply put, is *hot* — and his star still appears to be in ascension.

"I think that Boris' time is about to come — it's just about to happen," says Shirley Henschel, who for the past four years

has handled the licensing of Boris artwork — reproductions in other than the original mediums. "I think the interest in fantasy is just coming out of a fan audience to a national audience."

Besides posters and the three calendars he has produced, Boris' licensing activities includes everything from heat transfers for clothing to porcelain figures, greeting cards, Halloween costumes . . . and Henschel sees other avenues — a Boris game, paint-by-number duplications of his work the list goes on.

Grenadier Models is marketing a line of 77 mm vignettes duplicating scenes from Boris' works, under one of these licensing agreements. Four scenes have been released so far and are selling well, compared to competitors in the rather limited large-scale miniatures market, according to Grenadier's Ray Lubin.

"Obviously, Boris is a very popular artist," says Lubin.

Although part of the increased interest in Boris is due to an increased interest in fantasy, Henschel says the artist's work can stand on its own merits. Noting that no less than five films with fantasy themes have been released this summer, she adds, "I



think Boris' art will go on forever, even though the movies come and go."

"If I look at anything by Boris, I know immediately it's by Boris. Although he says he's an illustrator, not an artist, I remind him that Michelangelo was an illustrator, too. He's an artist, and a good one."

Whether it is proper to call Boris an illustrator, a painter, or an artist, he certainly has achieved a level of professionalism and recognition beyond that of all but a few of his peers. He has that nebulous but palpable quality of *Success!*.

Not a little bit of which, Boris is quick to point out, is due to his name. He discusses this and other business matters with an engaging openness and frankness that is unusual, particularly in a field where mention of finances is something of a *faux pax*.

Although he doesn't recall just when he started signing his works with his first name — it was before he came to the U.S. —he says it has been an asset.

"This is a very important point," he says. "I really think that people have to remember not only your work, but who you are. I wouldn't say that it's a *gimmick*, but it's something that really helps people to remember me."

"Why do they change the names of movie stars? Because it's more commercial, it's easier to remember. So, I sign the name Boris, as opposed to Vallejo. (*pronounced vah-yay-hoe*) People see Vallejo and they say, what is this? Val-ee-who? Val-ah-hoo? And then you're going to forget it."

While Henschel arranges licensing of Boris' reproductions, the artist himself negotiates the commission and sale of original creations.

"...I know a lot of artists are that way—they hate discussing money. I love it, I really, really like it. That's why I don't have any agent as far as creating a work goes, because I really like to get into all the discussions about money."

"I'm very commercial. I mean — that is why my work is licensed. You cannot live without money."

Like his signature, this financial sense preceded his success, he says, and Boris further attributes much of his popularity, his *star* quality, to an "instinct" that transcends talent.

"It's really difficult to pinpoint," he says. "A lot of people have talent, but they lack another thing. If you are going to be somebody special, somebody *really* special . . . you have to have it right from the beginning."

Boris believes he has that special quality, though he says that talent is only part of it. "I'm perfectly aware of the fact that I have very outstanding ability. I don't fool myself with false modesty about it, and I am going to use it."

He illustrates the point with body builder Arnold Schwarzenegger, who made "pumping iron" a phrase understood in kitchens and living rooms instead of just in gymnasiums.

"There are people who have worked out as hard as Schwarzenegger, but they don't have his reputation. They will never develop as much as Schwarzenegger. They can be very good, they can be Mr. Universe, but they will never be Schwarzenegger."

"Whether he is the best or not is questionable I don't think he is the best, but he is the one that became the epitome of body

building.... Not only was he perhaps the biggest, he had a tremendous sense for business, showmanship — all these things combine together."

Since he began fantasy painting commercially a decade ago, Boris has perhaps reached a similar plateau. He now paints exclusively fantasy and science fiction images — even when he is commissioned to do an advertisement, as he recently was by a cigarette manufacturer. (Boris himself does not drink or smoke.)

Becoming a success is a difficult phenomenon to describe, and attempting to do that ultimately prompts a certain fatalism from Vallejo.

"I basically believe that either you have it, or you don't," he says. "I really think so. But I also think what it is to have it involves a number of different things.... You not only have to have talent, you have to know how to use it, and you have to be able to work hard enough to develop it. And you have to have

some degree of specialness that sets you apart from the rest of the talented people. And I think that has a lot to do with yourself. It's not only just there, it has to do with yourself very much. I mean, a number of people are very, very — *extremely* — talented, and they do nothing, or very little. So obviously it has a lot to do with yourself."

"I think that anybody that is in the creative arts — whether it's painting, sculpture, writing, music — really is very intense about it. I think that is the only way. If you are going to be really half-assed about it, forget it. There are a lot of half asses around."

A prime requisite, he says, is recognizing what is the critical step at each phase of the creative process. When to think about money; when to think about the art.

"The first purpose in painting is in order to make a living," he says. "There is no question about that. I know I want to make money; I know I have bills to pay, and to do it I have to make money. The more the merrier. But having taken care of that, I don't think about it any more. I don't do the painting just to get the money. Once I have taken care of how much I am going to charge for the painting, then the painting is the important thing. I don't do it to get it out of the way, (or

to get the money."

And money, he says, is not the only consideration when he decides whether to accept a commission or a project.

"The deadline, of course, is almost symbolic, like somebody waiting for it. I can't stand the idea, for instance, of going into fine art and . . . selling a painting that's going to be hanging on somebody's wall and that's the end of it. I have to reach as many people as I can, and of course this is the idea of doing commercial work, books — the deadline is symbolic that people are waiting for it. If I didn't know that people are waiting for it, I wouldn't bother with it."

(What if someone made him an offer he couldn't refuse, say, \$50,000 for a piece?)

"Well, I'd do it," he says with a laugh—and without hesitation. "I'd do it and, 'Hang it on your wall,' I would say.")

A mass audience brings with it fame and attention that doesn't frighten Vallejo, although he recognizes it as both a benefit and a burden.

"I like to accomplish as much as I can accomplish, and I assume, of course, that popularity goes with this. Now, what



*The Space Guardian (1979)*

degree of popularity I would like to achieve, that is questionable. Because, of course, there are pros and cons to that. The pro of course is, it feels nice if I go for instance to a store and — I wouldn't say this happens all the time, but it happens that I go to a restaurant and pay with a credit card and either the waiter or the clerk goes, 'Are you the artist?' And it feels nice."

And, he notes, there's the added attraction that you can demand higher fees.

"Inasmuch as you are better known, your stuff sells better, and obviously whoever it is can afford to pay more money because they are going to make more money with it. It sells better, there's no question about it.

"Now, on the other hand, I would not like it to get to the point where it would really affect my private life."

But, he says, it's unlikely an artist's or author's fame would reach that of a movie star or television personality.

"You've heard of Stephen King? Stephen King is making millions with his books all of them are going to be made into movies — a few already have been made into movies — but still you see Stephen King on the street and that's that. You don't know who he is. And even if somebody was to say, 'That's Stephen King,' you would say, 'Oh, that's nice.'"

Mass popularity is also a matter of public relations — of pushing yourself, and Boris is selective on that front. His appearance at this summer's GEN CON® convention is one of his rare public appearances, which he's found can be "trying."

Not only do the questions repeat themselves, but his fans "really feel they own you, and that's fine, to a certain degree, that's fine, but only to a certain degree.

"They want you to do drawings for them, and I don't do drawings for free. I do a sketch, for instance, for a publisher, and then I sell the sketch for \$700, \$1,000. I get paid for my work. I'm a professional. So I cannot sit down and do a drawing of somebody, and then of course I have a line of 200 people waiting also for drawings."

Cutting back on his public schedule is only one of the changes commercial success has brought to Boris and his life.

In the past three or four years he has attempted to modify long-entrenched habits of intense work. Instead of working almost without interruption, he now seriously works at taking time off.

"I take about three days off a week," he says. "I like to get in my car and just drive around and go to the woods or go to the beach and basically just be by myself and do whatever I want to do — go to movies, I love to go to bookstores, and basically, not have to talk to anybody or make contact with anybody."

He finds it easier to work and relax at this more regular, more consistent pace, rather than working in spurts between lengthier vacations, a tack he tried unsuccessfully.

"It's really difficult for me to sit down and do nothing, if you do it too much. I mean, the times I have gone on vacation, for instance — I can take a week of it, and then after a week I get really totally restless. I really feel that I really like to paint, I really like to draw. And I have always ended up doing that. I say, 'Well, I am going away for two weeks and I am not going to do anything for those two weeks, and my wife laughs, because she knows

it's not going to happen. And after the first week I really start to get restless and I go to the local art store and get some art supplies and stuff . . . I haven't really taken a vacation for about three years, I really don't like to take that long a time, because you lose momentum."

If taking a whole vacation is difficult, just learning to take any time off was a challenge for Vallejo. "I worked every day of the week for months at a stretch before taking a break," he recalls. "And I would work, oh, 12, 14 hours, 18 hours, 24 hours — I have worked as much as 36 hours." But, he says, he finally realized that taking time off was a necessity — at a potentially disastrous time in his life which he discusses with typical frankness.

"You see, what happened is I actually got to a point that I had worked so hard for so many years that I felt I was losing my mind. I was just so tense and nervous all the time. And this to me was a revelation — that I didn't have to work all so hard — I really don't have to."

"...I wouldn't say I went over the edge, but I was really close. Because I wasn't really enjoying at all what I was doing. I wasn't enjoying my family. I wasn't enjoying my children."

So, for three months one summer he did nothing. In all, he says it took probably a year to reach the pace he now attempts to keep, a decision he calls "one of the wisest decisions I have ever made in my life — not to kill myself. It wasn't worth it, it really was not. My work was suffering with it, and I was reaching the point of diminishing returns."

"It took me close to a year to slow my life down, because I had been so used to really, really working — work and work and work. For years I worked really, really hard.... It took me really about a year to realize I had to cut down on that, and it was a tough decision, because I had to struggle not only with myself, (but) with guilt."

**T**he intensity began early, as did his drawing. He recalls the house of his middle-class childhood in Lima, where both of his parents were teachers (his father was also a lawyer) with strong interests in music and literature.

Starting at age 3 with likenesses of Popeye, Vallejo drew on the walls of the house; as the new pictures sprout-

ed higher and higher, they also got better and better.

He entered grade school early, at age four, and graduated from the Peruvian equivalent of high school when he was 15. Combined with school were classes at art and music schools — a schedule that kept him occupied from 8:00 in the morning to 10:30 at night, and included Saturday classes.

He got his first commercial art job at age 16, and after college pre-medical studies entered the field full-time at 19. Four years later, in 1964, he felt he had reached the limits of what his native land could offer him, and he headed for new challenges. He arrived in New York, speaking no English, determined to wash floors or do anything to support himself. He didn't have to, as it turned out, because he promptly landed a job illustrating for a chain of department stores. Besides enabling him to meet his wife, who joined the firm's art department a year or so after he did, the job was a start, albeit on the bottom rung, on the ladder to success in America.

"I was one of the top artists in my country," he says of his



*A Web Of Wizardry (1978)*



decision to emigrate. "If you have a little bit of ambition — which I have a lot of — you realize, 'So what?' You know, I know a number of people who prefer to be a big fish in a small pond. As long as they are the biggest, it doesn't matter how big it is. I never felt that way. I always wanted to do as well as I could do, to go higher and higher."

Vallejo feels he has been lucky. Rarely, he says, has he had to look for work, resorting to peddling his portfolio only a few times. That doesn't mean life was easy — even in the best of times, free-lancing is a precarious existence.

"It's a tough job, actually," he says. "You see, what happens is, you don't have a reputation. Of course, you cannot command the prices of someone who does have a reputation, who sells.... And the time when I was working really, really hard was before I was doing (free-lance) illustration. I was doing drawings for department stores — refrigerators, furniture and all those things, and —Jesus! — I used to make \$10 for each drawing. To make \$100 you had to make 10 drawings!... It is really tedious, and it takes forever, so you have to work and work and work it's really very tedious, and even then I took pride in what I did. I tried to do it as nice as I could, and perhaps put a different twist to the whole thing as opposed to the way everybody else was doing it."

"...I *hated* it. I really hated it. It was boring. Nonetheless, I took pride in it. I really wanted to do as well as I could do. It gave me a certain amount of discipline, it gave me a very good feeling for detail. Regardless of whether it's what you want to do, if you put yourself into it, you learn something."

He never exactly starved in the U.S., but those salad days were lean ones.

"I tell you, when I first came to this country, I would eat actually four days of the week, and the other three days I would buy a loaf of bread and divide the slices into three, and if I ate more than I was supposed to, if I ate, for instance, seven slices of bread one day, as opposed to six, then there was one less for the next day."

"I remember when I came here my body weight was about 180, and in four months I went down to 139. That gives you some kind of idea. And, even after, when I got married, there were times that we just didn't have money to pay the bills....What are you going to do? You can't pay them. So there have been ups and downs."

"...One always has to worry about money, by the way. It doesn't matter how much you make, you're going to have more expenses, that's all."

Ultimately, it wasn't refrigerators that established Vallejo professionally, but fantasy — an interest that started with science fiction in Peru.

"I used to read a magazine called *Beyond* (it was called *Mas Alla* in Spanish)... Then I came here to the States and I saw the work of Frank Frazetta, in the early '60s, and it really appealed to me a lot. It had the fantasy that I liked, and it had, since I was involved in body building, muscular heroes, it appealed to me."

Beginning with comic-book covers in 1971, he worked his way up to paperback book jackets in a few years, and estimates he has produced as many as 40 to 50 covers in a single year.

Although some of the covers were romances, some were

mysteries, most were in the genre in which he has become known. Rather than viewing this strictly as a limitation to his creative abilities, he treats it in a positive fashion.

"You have to realize that especially here in America is the land of the specialist," he says.

"Say you have a pain in your stomach. You go to a specialist. You're having trouble with your foot, you go to a podiatrist, and so on. In South America, it wouldn't be that way. In South America, I did *everything*, because the market was much smaller. So we did everything — layout, lettering, finishing work, oil paintings, portraits, whatever. And in America, it's not that way at all. You have a specialty and the art director likes to go to the person who is going to do that type of thing, because painting a specialty essentially means you can do it better than anybody else."

"...It is a limitation. I'm not going to tell you it isn't a limitation. But once (I) get to a certain point. I can do what I want with this."

"Everything has limitations — everything. I would say that even it is better to have certain limitations. For instance, this cover of *DRAGON* magazine, if they had said, do anything, you know, I would go nuts trying to think, 'What am I going to do?' But you said, you can do anything, but it has to be related to dragons. Okay, so you have a limitation there, but it puts you within certain boundaries. You have an idea of where you are going to go."

Although he says he once found the prospect of open-ended assignments overwhelming, Boris says this type of challenge is better suited to his artistic temperament.

"At this point, my head is full of ideas," he says. "It is probably better for me now to have them open."

Once the direction of a piece is established, Boris says it doesn't normally swerve.

"Once I've made a decision — whatever direction it is — that's it. I don't think too much about it. I'm accused of being very stubborn; perhaps it's a little bit of stubbornness. But I think that mostly, it's a strength. I think I know what I want and I think I also know how to get it, how to go about it."

This confidence seems to be enhanced by his use of the same model and similar themes, subject matter

and construction in most of his work. Coupled with this is a trend toward an increasingly realistic, almost photographic style that is particularly evident in his *Mirages* paintings, as if Vallejo yearns to create the perfect representation of this moment of beauty, investigating every facet of a gem.

The pattern he has repeatedly used for his work — the vertical axis, dictated by the dimension of a paperback book, one or two central characters — these limitations have not restricted his artistic freedom.

"If you were to see the paintings I did two years ago, even a year ago, I think you would see an improvement, the technique develops my work becomes more precise, more accurate, more polished, more careful, and I enjoy it that way. I don't feel that that is restrictive at all, that it lacks artistic sense. I think quite the contrary . . . I'm very impressed by the skill of a work. I don't like to see sloppy painting."

Which is not to say that he *cannot* work in more impressionistic, looser styles, or horizontal formats, or whatever.



*The Berserker* (1978)

"(If) you are a professional drawer, you should be able to do anything, *anything*, in any way, and I feel that I can do that.

"It's like playing an instrument," he says, with a glance toward one of two violin cases that sit on a nearby piano. "Before you can really make music, you have to know how to play it, otherwise it just doesn't come out. If you are going to have technical problems, then of course the music isn't going to come out the way it's supposed to. The technique has to be second nature you cannot paint if you do not know how to draw."

As for his tendency to have one or two central figures dominate his works, leaving inanimate objects to the background, he says, "I have several reasons, actually. One of the reasons is that if you do something beautiful, really well done, you don't have to flatter it then again, if your eyes are pulled to one thing, as opposed to a lot of distractions, I think it has more impact. And last of all. I am very lazy, so it is much easier to do one or two figures as opposed to a dozen."

Despite the little chuckles punctuating that last comment, and despite his history of intense work habits, to some extent Boris is sincere about being "lazy." Perhaps this is complemented by the "guilt" he says he sometimes feels about taking time off; perhaps it is a bit of self-deception that helps generate the intensity he brings to his work.

Confronted with the pressure of yet another deadline, he does what many artists and writers do: He waits even longer, stretching his margin thinner and thinner, until more delay is impossible.

"I have to block out everything," he says. "You just have to do it."

"I have to get psyched up to start painting, every time. I don't care how many times—I have done it hundreds of times—but every time I have a white board in front of me, it's always very frightening, just to know in a few days I have to have a work finished, and it has to be at least as good as the one before, and preferably better. It's very frightening."

This pressure to keep progressing in quality represents a change in attitude from his early days when, he says, "I wanted to be THE TOP ARTIST." Now, he says, "I don't concern myself with other people at all. I compare my self to myself. What I do now, to what I did last month, six months ago. I know at this point that I only have to get better than myself."

The progress has always come, he says, and it is better not to think about whether the growth will always continue.

"I think about it every now and then, that I am going to wake up in the morning and not be able to draw, you know. And it happens, you have good days and bad days. There are certain days, it just doesn't come out quite as easy, you have to struggle with something that is very simple at another time. It doesn't happen as often now as it used to, but there are bad days too."

On a "bad day," he says, "I just go on. You see, I am a professional. I paint not only because I love to paint, but because it is my work. I have to do it. Let's say, for instance, you work at a bank, you are a bank teller. If you don't feel right about going to work that day, you still have to go and do it.

"It's a very interesting thing, because people have asked me if my mood influences my work, and my mood absolutely does not influence my work. My work influences my mood, but not the other way around. I may have personal problems, I may have all kinds of things going on, but I sit down and work just the same."

With such a disciplined concept of professionalism, and with such intense work habits, isn't saying he is lazy is a paradox?

"Yes, it is a paradox," he answers, "but I think that paradoxes happen all the time."

"As much as I love painting, I'd rather not do it all the time, because it's (easier) to go downhill than uphill. It may at times be enjoyable, but most of the time it's work. And let's face it, I think most of us don't like work. If I didn't have to work, I probably would work a lot less. I *definitely* would work a lot less.

"As it is right now, I'm really very selective about what I take. and it so happens there is a lot of demand there, so even when I want to be selective, there is still enough work to keep really busy.

"But my ideal situation, the way I see things right now anyhow—that could change—but my ideal originally is to do one painting a month, and do it nice, do it just right and not have to worry about paying bills or anything like that."

**W**hether he'll ever reach that plateau he admits is questionable, for several reasons. "Probably what would happen if I get enough money to do one painting a month and there is enough demand, I would probably prefer to do two or three and have two or three times as much money."

In the past few years he estimates that 85 percent of his work has been for paperback covers—a figure he expects to decrease substantially from now on. His next project after *Mirages*, a book in conjunction with his model. And there is always the lure of other media—movies, for example—although he says the switch would have to involve not money alone, but a significant role in the production of a film.

"I have been offered stage settings for movies and I figure, Jesus, it's going to take me several months, I'm going to be away and then what am I going to do? I'm going to get a credit at the end of the movie. If your name is going to be very prominent there, that's one thing, but if it's going to be one of the etceteras, forget it. It's a waste of time. I can make the same amount of money and still have my name pushed forward."

"I'll get there, I'm not in a hurry at this point. I always tell people, if I really want to get something, I'll get it. I don't know when or how long it's going to take, but if I really want it bad enough, I'll get it."

"Goal" is a word he avoids using, "because a goal is a limitation. I mean, you reach that goal, then what? What are you going to do next? I just go on. It's always a step higher, higher."

"I am going to get as high as I can, as I am capable of getting. How high is high? I don't know. I don't make goals because I don't know how high is high. I just keep working."

"Working," he repeats, savoring the word. "Whatever happens, happens."



*A Hostage For Hinterland (1976)*



# GIANTS IN THE EARTH

## CLASSIC HEROES FROM FICTION & LITERATURE

### Island enchanter

#### Author's introduction

Often, in the course of a long campaign, a party of player characters will take a long journey aboard ship to reach a goal. While it is possible to say something like: "After sailing for four weeks, you reach the harbor," many Dungeon Masters prefer to stick more strictly to the time sequence and the campaign map. It can get quite boring for players and DM alike if the DM rolls the dice every so many hexes only to say: "No, nothing encountered." The non-player characters described below have been designed to fill this kind of gap in a campaign. Their islands can be placed wherever the DM wishes.

#### William Shakespeare's PROSPERO

##### 14th-level Magic-user

Alignment: *Lawful Good*

Hit Points: 26

Armor Class: 10

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1-4

Hit Bonus: *None*

Move: 12"

Psionic Ability: *Nil*

Strength: 13

Intelligence: 18

Wisdom: 14

Dexterity: 13

Constitution: 12

Charisma: 15

Prospero was once Duke of Milan, but his true love was the study of magic, not the business of government. As he became increasingly engrossed in the magical arts, he turned more and more of the power and the affairs of state over to Antonio, his brother. Antonio was not content with the unusual honors showered upon him and conspired with the King of Naples to oust his brother completely. Only Prospero's great popularity with his people saved his life.

Rather than kill him and risk rebellion, Antonio put Prospero and his three-year-old daughter Miranda into a leaky



boat, which was then towed out to sea and abandoned. A good counselor, Gonzalo, managed to smuggle food, clothing, and Prospero's magic books onto the boat. After drifting aimlessly at sea for a long time, the boat ran ashore on a deserted island. There Prospero built a rough home for himself and Miranda and turned to his magical studies as his only consolation.

Prospero is a man in his early forties tall and spare, with a heavy beard streaked with gray, and brooding, dark eyes. His clothing is the much-mended remains of a once-splendid wardrobe: worn brocades and dirty velvets in an early Elizabethan style. In spite of his situation, he is still a courtly nobleman, courteous and gracious. Since he has good reason to fear for his life, however, he will be very suspicious of strangers at first. Once he is sure that they aren't assassins sent by his brother, he will unbend and treat his guests well. He will politely refuse any offers of rescue, because he is brewing an elaborate plan of revenge on the usurpers of his dukedom.

To avoid undue complications, the DM should make Miranda a timid child of age 12 or so, rather than the beautiful young woman depicted in *The Tempest* by

Shakespeare. She will be wearing roughly sewn clothes cut down from her father's cast-offs.

Since Prospero has a formidable knowledge of magic as well as a large library of books, it is likely that greedy player-character magic-users will try to pick his brain for their own spell books. However, Prospero has developed an ambivalent attitude toward magic since, after all, it's the cause of his present difficulties. If pressed, he will warn the character against delving too deeply into dark things and refuse to trade a spell for anything other than concrete news about his homeland. If, for instance, the player of a character has read *The Tempest* and is clever enough to tell Prospero that Duke Antonio, the King of Naples, and the king's son are planning to take a long sea voyage soon, then that character would by all means be rewarded with a low-level spell, if a magic-user, or some minor magical item usable by his or her class, if not.

If the DM chooses Prospero's spells, one of them should always be *Control Weather*. Prospero also has a special spell, *Power Word, Cramps*, described in detail by Shakespeare. Since this spell is not a part of the AD&D™ rules, the DM should never let a player character learn this spell for his or her own use. If the DM wishes, he or she may use the following list of spells, which includes all of those mentioned in Shakespeare's play.

First level: *Charm Person, Message, Read Magic, Sleep, Write*.

Second level: *Detect Evil, ESP, forget, Invisibility, Scare*.

Third level: *Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Hold Person, Slow, Tongues*.

Fourth level: *Charm Monster, Fear, Hallucinatory Terrain, Remove Curse*.

Fifth level: *Airy Water, Conjure Elementals, Distance Distortion, Hold Monster*.

Sixth level: *Control Weather, Spiritwrack*.

Seventh level: *Power Word, Cramps*. This spell is cast like *Power Word, Stun* except that the material component is a thorn. The afflicted creature will suffer cramps and aches in all of his or her joints, as well as sharp pains in the side, like a combination of having arthritis and being pinched all over.

Prospero owns a white *Robe of the Archmagi* and a *Libram of Silver Magic*.

### Prospero's servants

Prospero has two servants of vastly different natures who can have a great effect on the outcome of encounters with the duke-magician and his daughter. They are Ariel and Caliban, for which descriptions are given below.

#### Ariel, a high-grade air elemental

Armor class: 2

Move: 36"

Hit Dice: 16

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 2-20

Special Attacks: *Whirlwind, as per a regular air elemental; Sleep spell*

Special Defenses: +2 *weapon to hit; Invisibility and Blink spells*

Magic Resistance: *Standard*

Intelligence: *Average*

Alignment: *Neutral*

Size: *L (but see below)*

Psionic Ability: *Nil*

Ariel is a much higher grade of air elemental than would normally serve any magic-user. Prospero freed it from imprisonment inside an oak tree, where it was trapped by an evil witch named Sycorax. In gratitude, Ariel swore an oath to serve Prospero until Prospero achieves his revenge on his brother. Though Ariel longs for his ultimate freedom, he serves Prospero well and loyally.

Ariel can assume the shape of a slender adolescent boy when he wishes to communicate with dwellers on the Prime Material plane. In his whirlwind form, he is size L. He has 2-8 lesser elementals, with 8 hit dice each, at his command. In the form of breezes, these elementals constantly spy around the island and report anything unusual to Ariel immediately. If Prospero is physically attacked, Ariel and the others will rush to his defense, appearing after one melee round in the form of whirlwinds.

#### Caliban, a half-orc

Alignment: *Chaotic evil*

Hit Points: 7

Armor Class: 9

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1-6 (*axe*)

Hit Bonus: +1

Move: 9"

Psionic Ability: *Nil*

Strength: 17

Intelligence: 4

Wisdom: 2

Dexterity: 10

Constitution: 14

Charisma: 2

Caliban's human mother, Sycorax, was run out of her former town and exiled to

the island Prospero lives on. At the time, rumors had it that she was pregnant by a demon or devil, but Caliban's appearance indicates that his father was an orc of the vilest type,

Caliban is shambling, brutish and hairy, with a swinish cast to his features. He has one twisted foot, which slows his movement rate. Over a filthy tunic, he wears a heavy leather jerkin. He carries a woodsman's axe, and he can also use a log as a cudgel. If engaged in weaponless combat, he will bite if he gets the chance.

He is utterly unreliable, a liar and an

ingrate who has made improper advances to Miranda, even though Prospero has fed, clothed, and tried to educate him. Caliban hates Prospero and does his menial work only out of fear, especially of that *Power Word, Cramps* spell. Caliban will try to get the party of adventurers to turn against Prospero and burn the duke's magic books. If the party gives him liquor, Caliban will think them to be gods and will do anything they say to get more.

Source: *The Tempest* by Shakespeare.

Written by Katharine Brahtin Kerr



**CIRCE**  
The Beast-Mistress

#### 18th-level Magic-user

Alignment: *Chaotic neutral*

Hit Points: 38

Armor Class: 10

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1-4

Move: 12"

Hit Bonus: *None*

Psionic Ability: *132 points*

Attack/Defense Modes: *D/F,G*

Strength: 11

Intelligence: 18

Wisdom: 14

Dexterity: 13

Constitution: 12

Charisma: 18

Very little is known about Circe's background or family. Although she likes to

style herself a daughter of the sun god, Apollo, unkind folk point out that if that's the case, then she's a very unworthy daughter for her famous father. What is certain is that she is a woman of great wealth and magical power. For years, she has lived on an island which she claims Apollo himself gave to her. Others say that she stole it from an unfortunate minor king named Picus, whom she then turned into a woodpecker.

Circe is a very beautiful woman, with honey blonde hair and wide, innocent blue eyes. She is always beautifully dressed in long, embroidered tunics, with a golden fillet to keep her hair in place. Her manner, particularly toward fighters, is seductive, reminiscent of the madame of a very high-class brothel with a touch of sweet southern belle thrown in. She loves to act like a weak little woman who is overawed by anyone

as strong and brave as a party of adventurers. Underneath, of course, she is tough as nails and malicious to boot. There is a 65% probability that a woman adventurer in the party will see through her immediately, but even if one does, there is only a 5% probability that any of the men will listen to her. (Roll separately for each party member.)

While men have always considered her evil in alignment, Circe is basically only out for herself. She can be quite kind to women, particularly her maidservants, as long as the woman in question doesn't cross her. She turns men into animals merely because it amuses her, not because she is devoted to any dark power. In many respects she is highly cultured, with a taste for music, painting, and fine needle work of all sorts.

Her island is a lovely spot, always warm and sunny no matter what the weather in the rest of the ocean. A *Detect Magic* spell will show that the place is enchanted down to the very stones. From a shallow harbor, a narrow road runs to a splendid palace set in the middle of flower gardens. These flowers will be blooming no matter what time of year it is. In the garden, either chained outside or kept in golden cages, are many lions, leopards, and wolves. Though the animals look well cared for, they are all mopey and miserable. If a party of adventurers approaches them, they will whine and fawn as though desperately trying to make friends. Behind the palace are vegetable gardens and farm animals, including an unusually large number of swine. Again, if a party approaches, the swine will rush grunting and squealing to the side of their pen.

The animals and gardens are tended by pretty young women who are all unusually friendly (+25 modifier on the encounter reaction table, page 63, AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide). The women will eventually volunteer the information that their mistress is very hospitable to strangers and will offer to lead the party inside the palace.

In a glorious room with a tiled floor and golden walls, Circe herself will be sitting at a loom and singing while she weaves a fine tapestry. She will introduce herself as Glaucē, a Greek name that roughly translates as "Sweetie." If anyone knows or guesses her real name, she will pretend to be making a joke, but inside she'll be livid with rage. Circe will insist that the adventurers join her and her maidservants for a feast. Then she will summon the women, who will lay out food and drink and begin flirting with the adventurers, regardless of race. Circe will flirt with the leader of the party.

One bite of Circe's food or one swallow of drink from her table will turn any adventurer who is not wearing *moly* (see below) into an animal. While a saving

throw against polymorph should be allowed, it should be at -5, because her magic is two-pronged. Not only are there enchanted herbs in the food, but Circe has the *Polymorph Others* spell and a *Wand of Polymorphing*. The DM may opt for two separate saving throws with no modifier, if he or she prefers. Any player characters failing the saving throw(s) will be transformed thusly: clerics into lions, fighters into wolves, thieves into leopards, and magic-users (and any low-class hirelings or henchmen) into swine. Out of professional jealousy, Circe particularly dislikes magic-users.

If any character makes the saving throw(s), Circe will be furious. She will attack with other spells (DM's choice). If those fail, she will attack physically with fists and fingernails (use the pummeling table, page 72, DMG). The other women will scream and cower helplessly while all this is going on.

If a male warrior overmasters Circe at this point, she will turn weak and seductive, pretending that he's the man she's been waiting for all her life. Under this act, she will be plotting revenge. If the party outright refuses the offer of her food and drink, she will be first persuasive, then sulky, then furious enough to attack.

The best way to get the upper hand over Circe is to possess the strange herb known as *moly*. The god Hermes gave Ulysses some of this herb, said to grow only in Olympus. With it, Ulysses mastered Circe's magic and made her turn his crew back into men from swine. If the DM wants *moly* available in the campaign, it should either be fantastically expensive or else a gift to a cleric from his or her god.

If a character wears *moly*, all of Circe's *polymorph* spells will fail against that character, and the power of her other spells against that character will be weakened considerably; the character should get a +2 on all saving throws against her magic. Circe cannot touch this herb to steal it away, nor can her maidservants.

If the party impresses her with its superior strength and abilities, Circe can be reasoned with. If she is offered a reward, it is 75% likely that she will aid the party in some way, usually giving advice or information about the seas ahead. The reward must consist of luxury goods such as jewels and perfumes with a value of at least 10,000 gp. The chances of her agreeing to give advice or assistance increases by 5% increments for every additional 10,000 gp worth of reward offered. The fee for casting a spell or giving other great magical aid would be twice this amount. If the requested aid is easy to provide or if it amuses her to do so, Circe will be quite trustworthy. If it comes to bore her (65% chance,) she will have to be bribed further to continue.

She may release some of her imprisoned animals—for a price. The DM will have to determine how many, depending on how many the characters either want to release or have room aboard ship to rescue. There can be special cases: A paladin would never leave Circe's island without attempting to rescue every man/animal on it. DMs should consider alignment carefully when judging this aspect of the encounter.

If the party manages to overpower Circe so completely that she fears for her life, she will offer them all the riches of her palace as ransom, as well as freeing all the polymorphed men. The DM should describe a treasure so rich that the players think they've wandered into a Monty Haul campaign. As soon as they are one hex distant from the island after their departure with the treasure, 90% of the haul will turn to dead leaves, straw, and pig food. The freed men, however, will retain their human forms and will be very loyal to the party. Allowing for alignment differences, the DM should give a +15 bonus to the charisma modifier.

If the party attempts to sail back to the island when they discover Circe's treachery with the treasure, they will find only a faint lavender mist hanging over the ocean where the island formerly was.

If the DM wishes to choose Circe's spells, the various versions of *polymorph* should obviously be included. To save time, the DM may follow this list:

First level: *Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Friends, Read Magic, Sleep.*

Second level: *Detect Invisibility, ESP, Forget, Ray of Enfeeblement, Web.*

Third level: *Fly, Hold Person, Dispel Magic, Slow, Suggestion.*

Fourth level: *Charm Monster, Confusion, Fear, Polymorph Other, Massmorph.*

Fifth level: *Animal Growth, Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Passwall, Transmute Rock to Mud.*

Sixth level: *Control Weather, Enchant an Item, Legend Lore.*

Seventh level: *Charm Plants, Mass Invisibility, Vanish.*

Eighth level: *Mass Charm, Polymorph any Object.*

Ninth level: *Imprisonment.*

As for Circe's psionic disciplines, *Mass Domination* and *Shape Alteration* should be considered her major sciences. Her minor devotions are *Animal Telepathy* and *Hypnosis*.

Sources: Circe is a common figure in Graeco-Roman literature. The best Sources are the *Odyssey* by Homer, Book VIII, and the *Aeneid* by Vergil, Book VII. The DM can also look up her reference in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* by the various conflicting legends.

Written by Katharine Brahtin Kerr

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# Cavern of the SUB-TRAIN

## INTRODUCTION

*Cavern of the Sub-Train* is a scenario for an introductory or intermediate adventure for the GAMMA WORLD™ game. It has been designed for use by 2-8 players, 4-6 being optimal.

The adventure begins in the village of Om, where the characters have lived all of their lives. Life in the village has been rather uneventful, other than the usual dangers of the environment. Recently, however, a most unusual discovery has been made — one which will shortly send player characters on an exciting and dangerous adventure.

This scenario has been designed with the assumption that the Game Master has a thorough grasp of the GAMMA WORLD rules. Descriptions of common artifacts, creatures, and so forth have been kept to a minimum.

## BACKGROUND

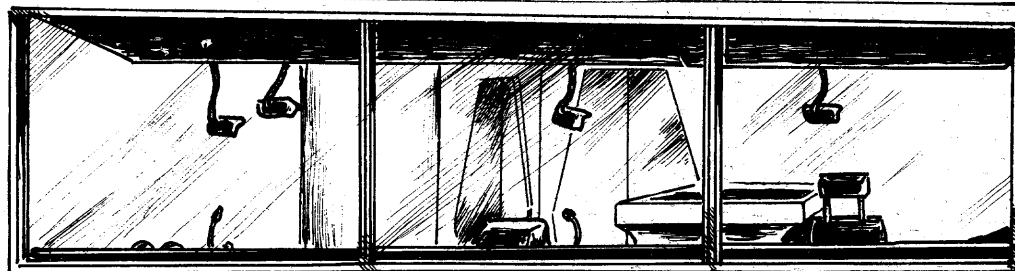
The tiny tribal state of Valley has existed for several generations, having been originally established early in the Black

Years that followed the destruction wrought by the Apocalypse in 2322. Tribal history tells that the tribe's ancestors fled south from an area of near-total destruction, following the river that now flows through Valley, seeking a place of relative safety. Details of the history are suspect, as the tales have been passed only by word of mouth from father to son over the years, but apparently these ancestors searched and struggled for many years through areas of death and destruction, until they discovered what is now the site of Hen, the northernmost and largest village of Valley, and settled there. North of Hen and stretching west of the river for many days' travel were (and still are) lands that were "unclean." To journey into them is to invite horrible diseases, danger and usually death. To the south, however, exist some wholesome lands, including the sites of the other two villages in the state of Valley, Parlund and Om (see map). South of Om, however, the lands become "unclean" once again.

It is known that all three of the tribal villages were once the sites of settlements of the Ancients; there are still old structures and broken artifacts to be found at these spots, and the remnants of a roadway still connects them. The fate of the original inhabitants, though, remains unknown. About 400 humans and mutants now live at Hen, and about half that number live at each of the other two sites.

Life in Valley is relatively safe, if somewhat boring, so long as one does not journey past the borders either to the north or south. The tribe has managed to establish an agricultural community, and much time is spent working the fields and tending the livestock. The remnants of the old structures of the Ancients have long since been thoroughly explored and hold no more mystery than an ordinary cave would. Indeed, most of the old structures are now used as dwelling places or storehouses for grain. Several artifacts of the Ancients are in the possession of various members of the tribe, but most are mere curiosities to be poked at or worn as decoration; the tales of their "magical" functions are either false, or the "magic" has fled or been exhausted.

In all, life has been rather idyllic in Valley. There is food for the table, a roof over one's head, and honest labor to occupy a man's hands. One day, however, while clearing a new patch of land for



# STATION-16

expanding one of the grain fields located just north of Om, one of the tribesmen felt his crude plow catch on something beneath the earth. After a few minutes of scraping and digging, the farmer uncovered a round, hard surface, about one meter across, made of what appeared to be the same indestructible (to the tribesmen) material as the roadway connecting the three villages. Digging away more earth around the edges revealed an edge — the surface was obviously a lid or covering for a barrel or tube sunk into the ground. Equipped with picks and bars, several of the tribe's strongest men attacked the lid in an effort to find what lay beneath. Their prying and beating had no visible effect on the featureless covering — until suddenly there was an audible "click," followed by an ear-piercing siren. The villagers rushed back in alarm, and well they did, for after a few seconds the scream of the siren was drowned out by a sharp explosion, and the lid was blasted several meters into the air.

All was silent afterward, and as the breeze carried away the dust, a dark hole into the earth was seen where the round covering had been. After waiting cautiously for several more moments, the villagers edged forward toward the gaping hole, each ready to spring back in an instant if anything threatening should appear.

Upon again reaching the edge of the opening, the villagers peered downward. The interior of the hole was a smooth, round tube leading straight down, featureless except for ladder-like rungs projecting from one side. The sun was still low in the morning sky, so the bottom of the tube, if there was a bottom, remained in darkness; however, a very dim red glow did reflect on the sides of the shaft, a source of illumination from somewhere below. Impulsively, one of the villagers picked up a nearby stone and tossed it into the hole. After a few seconds, a sharp clattering sound came echoing back up the tube.

The village elders held a quick council, and a short time later a young, strong tribesman with a burning torch in his hand, a short sword at his belt, and a rope tied about his waist, started to descend into the tube. Cautiously, the rope was played out by several of the villagers, ready to draw the young man back to the surface quickly if necessary. The flame of the torch grew smaller and smaller as the young villager continued his descent, the firelight replacing the dim red glow on the polished, smooth

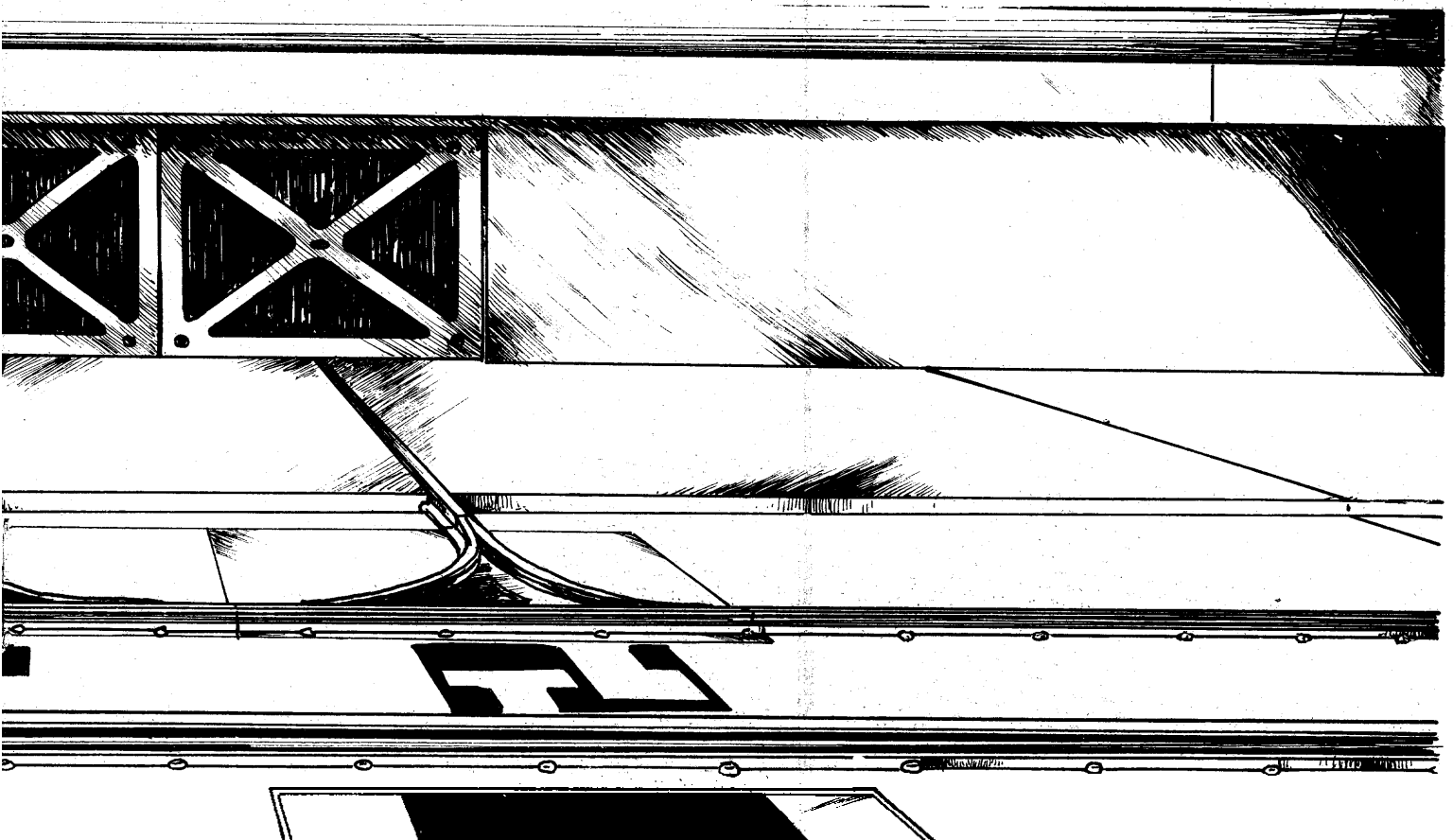
interior of the tube. Suddenly there was slack on the rope and a shout came from below as the man reached the bottom of the tube. The light from the flame vanished as he moved away from the opening to the surface, then the light returned moments later. A short time after that, the young man was back on the surface, his face flushed with excitement and his eyes bright with wonder. His report: A wide, smooth tunnel dimly lit with red light stretched to the north and south, as far as he could see! What wonder of the Ancients could this be?

That night, a council meeting of all the leaders of the villages of the Valley was called. The younger and more adventurous members of the group called for an immediate investigation of this new discovery, but the older and more cautious members of the council voiced the fear that such tampering might unleash some unknown power of the Ancients that could destroy the tiny state. After a lengthy debate, those calling for an investigation prevailed. Plans were laid for the selection of those who would undertake the exploration.

It is now three days since the opening

## **GAMMA WORLD** <sup>T.M.</sup> Scenario

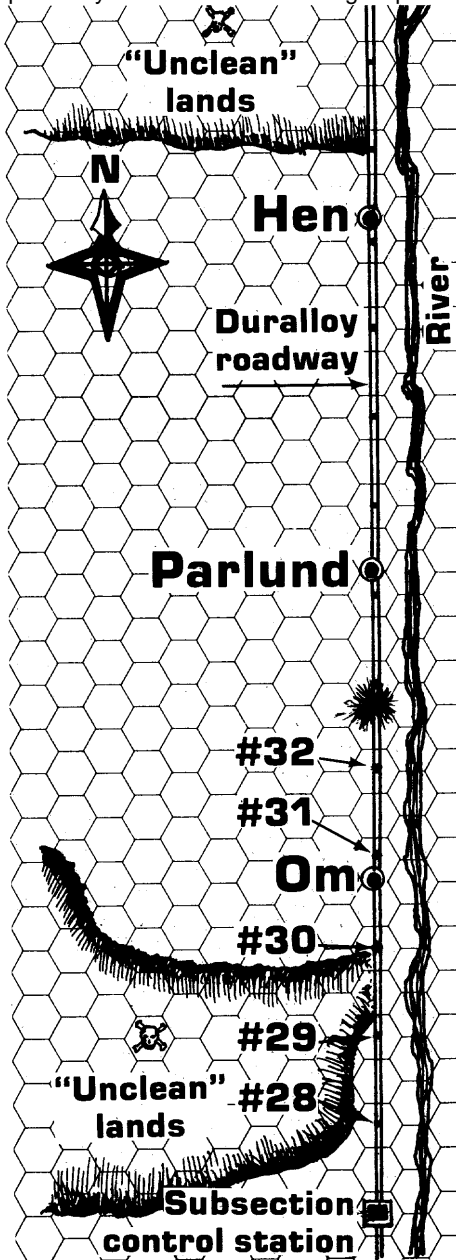
by Gary Jaquet



into the earth was discovered. You (the player characters) have been chosen to perform the exploration. You have been given certain equipment that may assist you in your venture. Your instructions: to explore the extent of this new discovery; to locate, and if possible acquire, any items or knowledge that may be useful to the tribe; and above all, to return and report your findings — or, as a concession to the more cautious factions of the tribe's leaders, the entrance will be sealed and labeled “off limits” as too dangerous to the tribe.

## NOTES TO THE GM

Players of this GAMMA WORLD scenario are about to enter a portion of a vast subterranean transportation network colloquially known as the sub-train. The system once spanned the North American continent and was used primarily as a method of high-speed



transportation of freight. The sub-train system is something like a 20th-century subway system, in that it consists of a self-propelled train moving through an underground tunnel. Unlike the 20th-century system, however, the "trains" moved through a vacuum while being supported on super-conducting magnetic rails at very high speeds. This method of electromotive propulsion proved superior to the old method of propulsion by anti-gravity suspension and tractor/pressor beam, in that the latter method required relatively large amounts of energy which could only be supplied by broadcast power, and the use of broadcast power in a subterranean environment proved impractical. Thus, the trains moved under electromagnetic suspension and propulsion, which required less energy, and that energy could be provided by atomic power packs.

The opening on the surface which the tribesmen have discovered is an emergency escape shaft, one of many built into the main system. The hatch over the shaft was wired up to explosive bolts which, over the years, had become unstable. The tribesmen's beating and prying on the hatch was enough of a shock to blow the bolts and open the hatch.

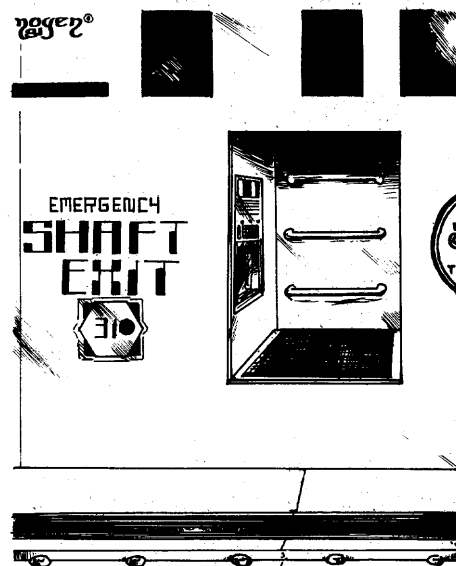
The main transportation tunnel is no longer airless, and certainly cannot be used for its intended purpose without massive repairs and adequate tools to make those repairs. Both the warfare that occurred on the surface (which blasted the tunnel open in many places) and the lack of supervised maintenance over the many years since the Apocalypse have made the tunnel little more than a long, straight cave. Several of the subsystems of the network, however, are still operative and powered; unwary explorers will face many hazards. Security systems, maintenance units, and subsection control systems — not to mention the creatures that now inhabit the tunnels — can all play a part as the players explore the remnants of this once-mighty transportation network.

Game Masters may want to incorporate the sub-train into their campaigns. For those who wish to do so, the following guidelines apply:

1. With rare exceptions, the sub-train route generally follows beneath the path of a duralloy highway.
2. Subsection control stations (described below) are located about every 50 kilometers along the route:
3. Escape shafts (described below) may be found about every 2 kilometers along the route.
4. Although the walls, ceiling, and floor of the sub-train tunnel are constructed of duralloy, it has been severely damaged in many locations. Wherever massive destruction may have occurred (population centers, military bases, etc.)

the tunnel is most likely broached, perhaps blocked.

5. In planning an expanded version of this scenario, the Game Master should take into account all natural factors that might affect the sub-train system on a larger scale than the area of the network presented herein: flooding, foul air, many types of blockages and obstructions, and the lairs of many different creatures may be found at other points along the complicated network. There will also be other types of control stations, outlines of which are given in the following text.



## Escape shafts

Emergency escape shafts are found every two kilometers along the sub-train tunnels. Each is identified from inside the tunnel by a bright blue panel glowing over the entryway and by a number on the tunnel wall. Escape shafts are numbered consecutively; the higher the number, the farther a hatch is from the nearest main control station. These shafts are 130 cm diameter duralloy tubes with built-in ladder rungs that lead from the side of the sub-train tunnel to the sealed hatchways on the surface.

From the tunnel the shaft entrance appears as a small, rectangular opening in the side of the tunnel wall, forming a small alcove. In the alcove is a simple control panel set into one wall, containing a communication unit (connected to the nearest subsection control station) and a large red "T" handle beneath a plastic protective shield.

Operating instructions for an escape hatch are written below the "T" handle in Ancient language (which the explorers will not necessarily understand): 1) *Lift cover.* 2) *Pull handle straight out.* 3) *Turn handle clockwise one-half turn.* This procedure activates a blast door that seals off the alcove from the tunnel, sounds a warning siren, then blows the hatch at the top of the escape shaft.

The blast door separating the escape

alcove from the tunnel slides out from one side of the opening to the tunnel and when not in use is recessed into the wall. Only a careful examination will reveal the seam, and even then it is doubtful the explorers will guess it is a door.

### The Tunnel

Sub-train tunnels are all similar in nature, although some may be larger (wider) than others to allow for more train movements, just as any single part of the railway system of the 20th century might have anywhere from a single pair of rails to dozens of tracks side by side. The standard tunnel, which this scenario uses, is 30 meters wide, with the ceiling seven meters above the floor. The basic construction is almost entirely made of duralloy.

Running down the floor of the tunnel are the superconducting monorails of the sub-train system. Each T-shaped rail rises about 35 centimeters above the floor. Four main rails are spaced fairly evenly across the floor, one for each sub-train this tunnel can accommodate. In addition, there is a smaller fifth rail running close to one wall of the tunnel. This rail is used for a unit which transports maintenance personnel and equipment.

Also found on the tunnel floor are various hatchways and access panels for maintenance of wiring, equipment, and other vital subsystems.

Sub-train tunnels are dimly lit by reddish glow-panels set in the ceiling. Above each escape shaft entryway is a brightly

glowing blue panel. Tunnel areas near subsection control stations are brightly lit with white light. The existence of lighting in any area of the tunnel system is contingent upon the operational status of power units and associated equipment. (The overhead lighting is still functional in the area where the explorers first descend, but that doesn't mean that lights will operate everywhere else inside the tunnel.)

### Subsection control stations

Subsection control stations are located every 25 kilometers along the route of the sub-train tunnels. These stations are for monitoring the operation of the sub-train system and also function as repair depots for the section of the tunnel they control.

Stations are normally "manned" by robots, but are also set up for use by human operators. Each station consists of the following parts:

1. Elevator — The elevator in the control station leads to the surface (the surface entrance to subsection control stations is detailed later). The elevator is operated by a simple up/down pushbutton control panel, located within the control room.

2. Control room — This main room of the control station contains a long, L-shaped control console beneath the windows facing the sub-train tunnel, with seats for three operators. This console is normally used only for monitoring the operation of the sub-train system, but

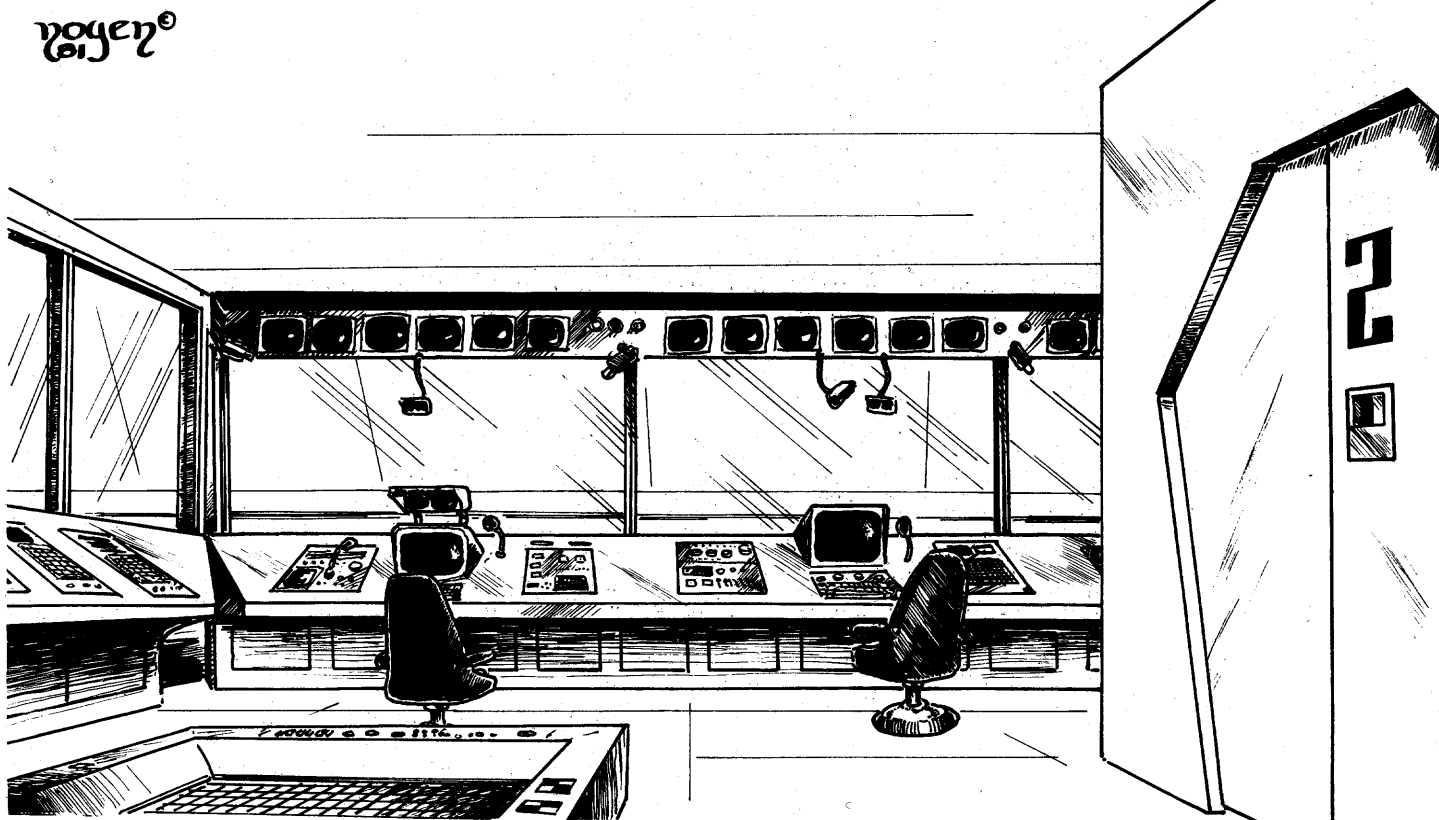
can, if necessary, override any system function or operation within the section it monitors. The console is very complex as a whole, but individual banks of controls are fairly simple — one bank of switches may operate the lighting system in the tunnel near the station, for example. Another may operate the doors to the maintenance equipment storage area, and so forth.

On the other side of the room from the control console is a large table-like object, the system status display. This device illustrates, by means of colored and flashing lights, the positions of all trains in the system, their rate and direction of travel, destination, etc. Beneath the light representing each train is a symbol code for that train that could be used to call up further information from the main control console.

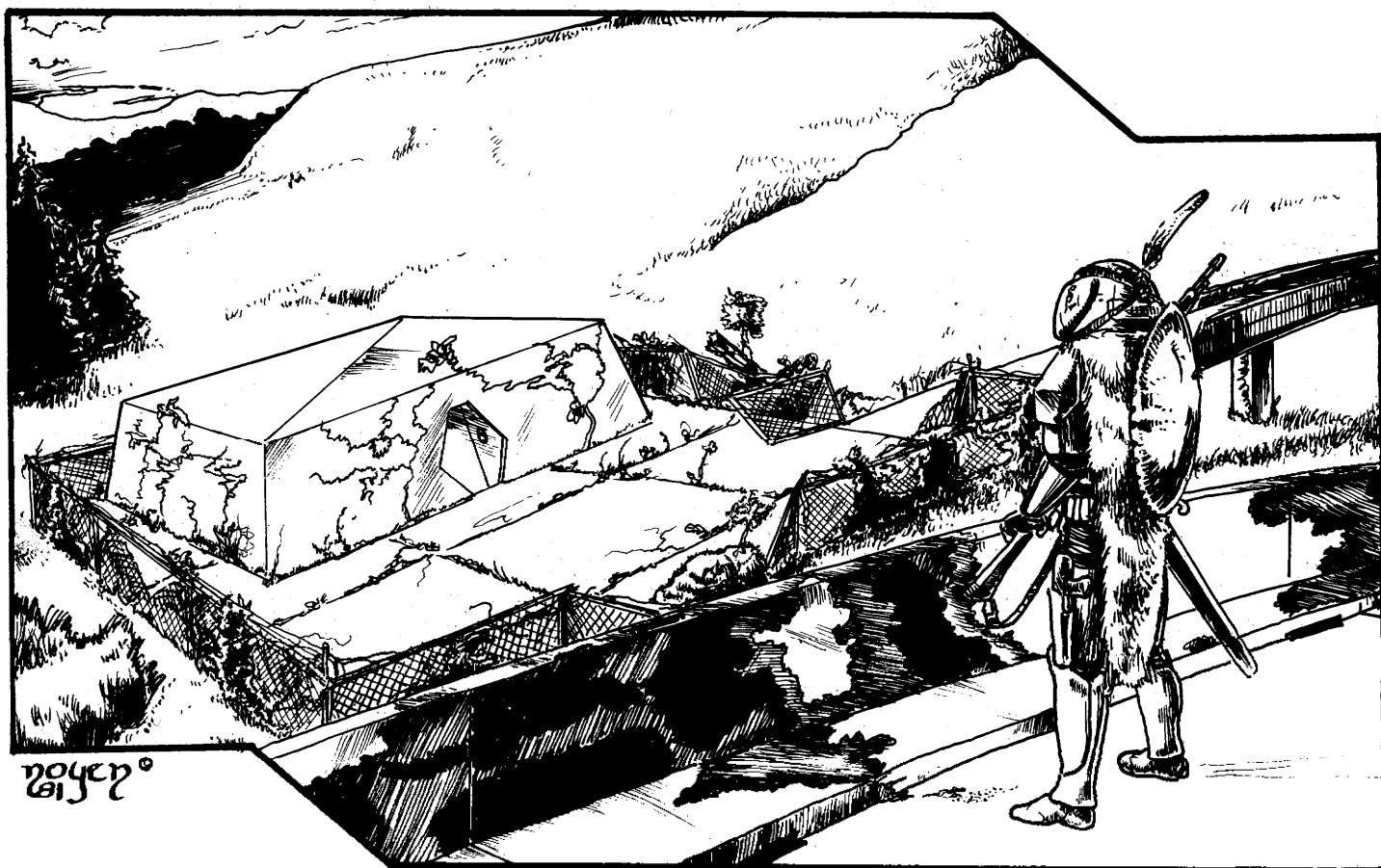
Attached to the wall near the elevator door is a small blue case with a large white cross on the cover: a first-aid kit. The cover is hinged and is held closed with a simple latch. Inside are 10 pain reducers, 10 stim doses, 3 cur-in doses, 5 accelera doses, 1 dose of anti-radiation serum, and 1 can of dressing spray (an antiseptic spray-on "skin" that stops minor bleeding, promotes healing, and protects the wound).

Attached to the wall below the first-aid kit is a fire extinguisher. It sprays a dry chemical powder and is good for 15 seconds continuous operation.

3. Maintenance area locker room — If necessary for a human operator to go







into the sub-train tunnel itself, he would of course have to prepare for vacuum conditions. In this area are three lockers, each containing a special vacuum suit. These suits are made of a semi-rigid plastic (armor class 3) and contain life support for 72 hours, 2-way radios for communication with other operators in suits and with the control station, a medi-kit, ultraviolet and infrared sensors, and a powerful tight-beam light mounted on the helmet. The suits are powered for up to 72 hours of operation by a hydrogen energy cell. When replaced in the lockers after use, the suits were automatically recharged (both power and life support).

Also in this area is a robot-recharging station, a rather complex control panel at which a robotic unit can plug itself in to recharge.

4. Airlock — For entrance to the maintenance area, which is kept in vacuum. Simple elevator-type, push-button controls are located on each side of each door.

5. Maintenance area — A garage-like area for storage of a personnel carrier and two maintenance-equipment carriers. The track for these vehicles leads from the tunnel across a platform and into the maintenance area through two heavy doors. These doors may be opened by controls in the maintenance area itself or from the control room.

6. Personnel carrier — A small vehicle

resembling an enclosed 20th-century golf cart. The personnel carrier will hold three persons dressed in vacuum suits. It operates on the same principle as the sub-trains (superconducting electromagnetic propulsion). Controls are simple: forward and reverse, speed, direction change (for "Y's" in the rail system), lights and life support (the carrier may be pressurized). Mounted on the dash of the vehicle is a removable portable control unit used to command the engineering robots.

7. Maintenance carriers— These small train-like vehicles consist of three sections. The forward section resembles an open personnel carrier with an engineering robot at the controls. Behind this section is an enclosed cart for carrying materials and equipment, and behind that is a similar cart which is not enclosed. The enclosed cart contains small tools and parts; the open cart can hold large structural repair materials and a small boom and winch.

#### **Surface entrances to subsection control stations**

Ground-level entrances to control stations along the sub-train route will be found directly above the station, generally near a duralloy roadway (as mentioned earlier, the sub-train system usually follows beneath the highway). These entryways were not used on a daily basis — the robots that operated the stations

usually stayed around the clock, and when it was necessary to leave the station (for maintenance or other purposes) they used the personnel carrier in the tunnel itself. However, when a human operator was required in the station (for periodic check-outs, maintenance of robots, etc.) the surface entrance was generally used.

The surface entrance is a simple structure with an adjacent vehicle parking area surrounded by a chain-link fence. The gate in the fence would open by radio signal from an authorized vehicle and close automatically after the vehicle was admitted. The entrance structure itself is a small, square building made of light metal alloy. The doorway to the entrance structure would open with use of a stage 2 maintenance ID. Inside the structure is a small room (3 meters by 4 meters). In the room is a desk and filing cabinet. On the desk is a communication console that connects with the main sub-train centers and the sub-section control station below. In one wall is another doorway, the elevator to the station. The elevator requires a special sub-train systems worker ID or a Stage 4 law enforcement ID to operate, or may be operated from the station below (after clearance through the communications console). Control of the elevator is by a simple up/down pushbutton panel as described earlier for the subsection station control room.

### Main section control stations

Main section control stations (not used in this adventure) are merely larger subsection control stations. They would be found in the sub-train system wherever tunnels intersect or branch, to monitor and control switching procedures and further monitor all subsection control station operation within their section.

### Entry/exit control stations

Entry/exit control stations (not used in this adventure) are similar to main section control stations, but they control the entry and exit of sub-trains into or out of the system for loading and unloading. Such stations would generally only be found near population centers.

### Sub-train control centers

Sub-train control centers (not used in this adventure) are the overall control and monitoring centers of the entire system. There are three control centers in North America, each supervising roughly an equal share of the overall system.

### STARTING NOTES TO PLAYERS

In preparation for your exploration of this new discovery, the villages of Valley have provided several pieces of equipment that may be of use. Each explorer is outfitted with the following items:

- knife
- bow and 12 arrows
- short sword
- hide shield
- 20 meters light line (made by the tribe from natural fibers; breaking strength 300 kilos)
- 2 candles, each able to burn for 6 hours
- flint and steel
- 6 torches, each able to burn for 2 hours
- backpack with food and water for 3 days

Each explorer wears leather and/or fur clothing (armor class 7, including shield).

In addition, certain artifacts of the Ancients are entrusted to the group, for possible use in exploration. These artifacts include:

Two 6 cm x 9 cm metallic cards, one edged in green, one edged in red. Both have symbols inscribed upon them, but the symbols are meaningless to the villagers or to the explorers. What is known about the objects is that they are required to open the few still-functioning doors of some of the structures of the Ancients in the village. This is accomplished by sliding one end into a slot beside the door.

Two sets of "see-in-the-dark" goggles. These devices fit over the eyes and allow the wearer to see objects in total darkness that could not normally be seen. It is also known that only objects that are warmer than their surroundings (warm-

blooded animals, rocks recently taken from a fire, etc.) may be seen.

"The Staff." This device has only been used twice in the memory of the tribe. On both occasions, a machine of the Ancients was moving down the remnant of the roadway connecting the villages of Valley. Before the first time it was used — many, many years in the past — all that was known was that the legends said it could stop the machines of the Ancients. Since it has only one moving part, a button on one end, the operation of the item was rather obvious — and when the button was pushed, the machine stopped. It remains on the roadway to this day. Just a few years ago, The Staff was used a second time. This time a machine came down the roadway from the north. When the button was pressed, the machine stopped as before — but this time it started moving again a few seconds later. The button was pressed again and the machine stopped again, but only for another few seconds. The process was repeated many times, until it finally became apparent to the tribesmen that the machine was going to continue on its course. Under close supervision, the machine continued to move south until it passed Om and into the "unclean" lands.

This is your equipment. Any players' suggestions for other items they would like to have (flasks of oil, mirrors, etc.) should be communicated to the GM, who will determine if such items would be available to the party.

### FURTHER NOTES TO THE GM

The artifacts of the Ancients listed above are, in reality, two ID cards (the green-edged one a second-stage civil service maintenance worker's ID, the red one a fourth-stage law enforcement ID), two pairs of infra-red goggles, and a type of control baton. The button on the control baton causes any robotic unit below fourth-stage ID control to cease all previously given instructions and await new orders (given vocally). Any higher-grade robotic unit will pause to await new instructions, but if none are forthcoming it will resume functioning and continue to follow its original instructions. The first machine mentioned in the player notes above was a second-stage light cargo lifter; it is still sitting on the roadway awaiting new instructions. The second machine was a fourth-stage security robot which paused for new instructions, and when none were forthcoming, continued on. In either case, the machines would not have been able to respond to the tribe's language, had they been given commands.

### START

The explorers first will (or should) determine their order of descent into the

escape shaft. Explorers may light torches, candles or lanterns on the surface and descend with them; drop a lighted torch down the shaft first (50% chance of its remaining lit); or light their light sources after descending in the dark. Illumination will be an important factor in this adventure, so the GM should keep a careful record of the passage of time and the status of the light sources of the party.

The rungs attached to the side of this escape shaft are in perfect condition, so there is no chance of one breaking. However, depending on how the party descends (encumbered with equipment, using one hand to hold a lit torch, etc.) the GM may want to allow a small chance for a character to slip or lose his grip. A smart party, for example, might drop in a torch, have one character descend unencumbered, lower all the gear to him by rope, and have the remaining characters follow.

Upon reaching the alcove at the bottom of the shaft, the party will find the shaft control panel.

**IMPORTANT:** The control panel is still active! If a character operates the "T" handle in the proper manner the door will close (of course, the explosive bolts have already blown, so nothing else would happen). The door takes three seconds to close, so anyone in the doorway should be able to move out of the way. However, if for any reason a character is caught as the door closes he will take 1-10 points of damage (mashed fingers to broken limb).

Normally, once the blast door was shut it would not be able to be reopened: Atmospheric pressure from the escape shaft once the hatch was blown against the vacuum of the tunnel would hold it shut until the escape hatch was replaced and the shaft re-evacuated. Now, though, with the pressure being the same on both sides of the door, the blast door may be slid open by characters with a combined strength of 40. The door will slide shut again once the characters release their hold. Voices will not carry through the door, although the sound of something solid (metal or stone) tapping against it will. Should the party become separated by the door, the GM must determine if the characters can communicate in their efforts to reopen it.

### EXPLORATION OF THE TUNNEL

Once the characters emerge from the escape shaft, they will find this section of the sub-train tunnel to be relatively undisturbed since the time of the Apocalypse in 2322. A slight current of air blows from the north (known only to the players if they have asked the GM if the torch flames flicker or if smoke trails in a particular direction), indicating an opening to the surface exists at some point



farther along in that direction. Players examining the floor of the tunnel will find a very fine layer of dust, and upon even closer examination, the tracks of small creatures like mice. As the characters explore immediately around the area of the opening to the escape shaft, they will notice light from glowing red panels overhead (the same light which could be seen from the surface). Painted on the wall beside the opening they have just left is a stylized symbol "31" — although the characters will only perceive it as a mysterious symbol of the Ancients.

At this point the players will have only two real choices of action: proceed along the tunnel to the north, or to the south. If the choice is north, the first item of interest encountered will be another escape shaft (#32) two kilometers to the north of their present position (see map). This shaft is active; if a player enters the alcove and pulls and turns the "T" handle, the blast door will close, the siren will sound, and a few seconds later the hatch on the surface covering the shaft will blow clear. This shaft opens in a field just to the north of Parlund, near the remnants of the duralloy roadway. Should the players exit at this point and return to

Parlund, the GM should play the part of the village leader and have the explorers descend again to continue their investigation.

As the explorers continue north from escape shaft #32, they will notice an increasing amount of debris on the floor of the tunnel — more dust than before, a few leaves, spider webs on girders, and so forth. About a kilometer north of escape shaft #32, the characters will begin to see actual rubble on the floor — dirt clods, rocks, etc. — and a few hundred meters beyond that, the tunnel is collapsed. This is the location on the map of the gap in the duralloy roadway, the result of an errant surface missile strike. At the time of the missile strike, the crater actually opened into the sub-train tunnel, but in the many years since, the pit has completely filled in. This effectively eliminates the possibility of exploring the tunnel further to the north, although diligent work could open a passage to the surface from here.

This area has become the burrow for a lair of three *parn* (chance of encounter 75%).

If the party explores south of escape shaft #31, the first item of interest will be

escape shaft #30, two kilometers south of #31. This shaft is completely inactive, save for the glowing blue panel over the entry alcove.

The party will find shaft #29 two kilometers south of #30. This shaft is active (the blast door will close and the siren sound), but the explosive bolts have all decomposed and will not blow the hatch cover.

Another two kilometers south of shaft #29 is shaft #28. At some time in the past, the hatch cover blew (either through instability of the explosive bolts, or perhaps when a worker tried to escape in 2322). The blast door is closed. If the explorers open it, they will find the entry alcove and shaft filled with earth, and in addition they will find it to be the lair of a *herp* that will attack with the advantage of surprise. If the explorers fail to kill the *herp*, they may outrun it in an attempt to escape, but the *herp* will track and pursue the party as long as they remain in the tunnel.

Two kilometers to the south of escape shaft #28 is a subsection control station. A few of the bright lights near the station are still burning (although somewhat dimmer than at full power), and the party will notice the glow from 500 meters away. This station will be the main encounter area for the group in this scenario.

Unknown to the party, the surface entrance to this station (which is several kilometers south of Om, in the region of "unclean" lands) has been discovered and opened by a group of *badders* that had a burrow near the structure. The *badders* quickly transferred their burrow to the control station and the tunnel area to the immediate south. This lair consists of six males (hp 33, 31, 24, 23, 21, 18), six females (hp 30, 27, 23, 21, 17, 16) and three young (hp 18, 15, 12).

The *badders* have forced open the doors to the surface entrance structure and the elevator doors inside, built a rough ladder to descend the elevator shaft to the top of the elevator car (which now rests at the control room level), and built another ladder from the trap door in the top of the elevator car to the floor of the car. The elevators to the control room itself have also been forced open.

When the *badders* discovered the control room, all was dark and inactive. (The main power line of the system had been severed and the back-up nuclear power system had not engaged.) One of the *badders* accidentally moved a control that activated the back-up power system, causing some lights to go on, and since that time, through trial and error, the *badders* have learned to control the lights and doors of the station.

The *badders* also discovered the remains of a human who died in the station in 2322, and among the remains were a

fourth-stage law enforcement ID, a fully charged laser pistol, and two extra hydrogen energy cells.

The remains are those of a law enforcement official assigned to the control room in 2322 to prevent sabotage. The badders do not know what the ID or the energy cells are. However, they do know what the laser pistol is and how it operates. The leader of the badders possessed such a weapon previously, but the energy cell was exhausted in learning its operation; now that the badder leader knows of the limited life of the weapon, he operates it only in emergencies. The pistol has five shots left on its present energy cell.

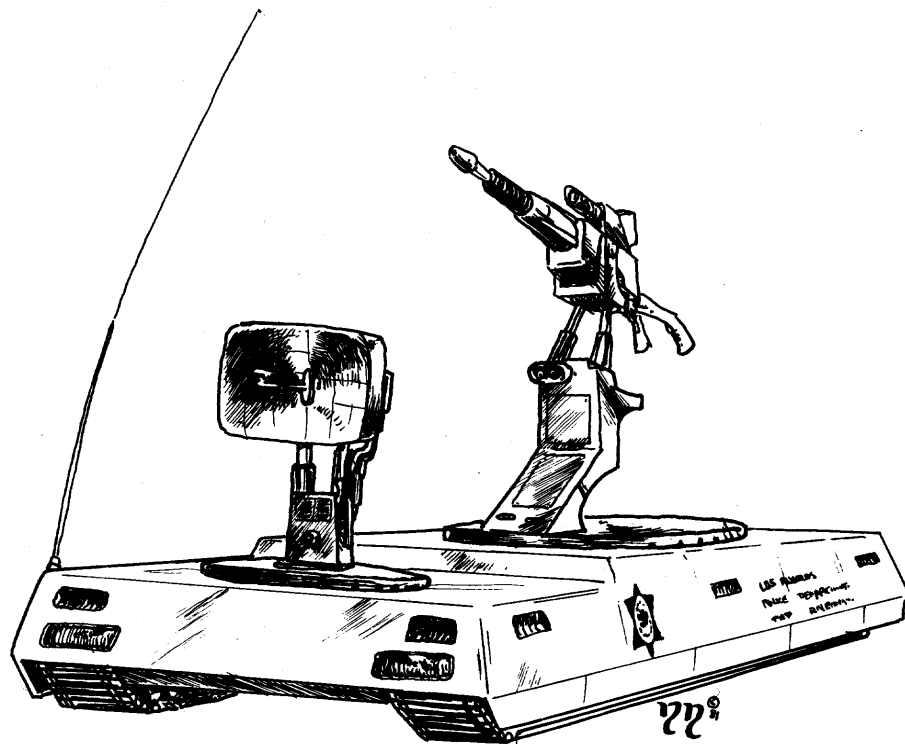
The badders also possess one other weapon of the Ancients: a vibro blade (15 minutes of charge left), which is carried by the 31-hit-point badder. All the other male badders carry regular swords and shields; the female badders have daggers. The young are weaponless. Badders will pick up and use weapons dropped by other fighters in melee.

As the characters approach the station, there is a 50% chance they will be spotted by a patrolling badder; otherwise, the characters will have surprise. As the characters approach the station, they will notice that one of the doors leading to the maintenance area is open. In the maintenance area are a personnel carrier, two maintenance carriers, and two engineering robots, all inactive at this time. Once they are discovered, the badders will fight to the death to defend their burrow. (The GM should remember to keep track of time if the herp from escape shaft #28 is pursuing the explorers.)

If the party defeats all the badders, the GM may then determine the results of any exploration and/or the condition of any artifacts in the station. The GM may wish to have the control station be totally ravaged by the badders, with nothing of value left, or may have the station in relatively undamaged condition.

If the party fights and then bypasses the badders and heads south, about a kilometer south of the control station they will find the tunnel collapsed. (The GM should give the same clues of increasing debris, as if the party had ventured north).

At the collapse, the party will find the wreckage of a sub-train that ran into the ruined tunnel. The wreckage of the sub-train consists of the main propulsion unit and three transport units. All units have been wrenched from the rail and lie at various angles to each other and the tunnel floor. The nose of the propulsion unit is completely smashed, and the side is split open to reveal several featureless, drum-like objects (large atomic energy cells) 90 cm in diameter and 2 meters tall. Also visible through the split are wires of



many colors, tubes, small mechanical linkages, etc.

The three transport units, although bent and dented, are relatively intact. The hatches to the transport units are locked and may only be opened by physically ripping off the hatch (unlikely to be accomplished by sheer muscle power, without at least prybars, block and tackles, and hammers and chisels), or by cutting them open with some energy weapon (blasting off the latch mechanism with a few shots from a laser pistol, cutting with a vibro blade, etc.) Two of the transport units contain only duralloy building components — beams, sheets, pipes, etc. — but the third contains a piece of special military equipment: a defense platform.

This device started as a light cargo lifter but has had the manipulative devices removed. On the platform is mounted a force-field generator. This device generates a hemispherical polarized force field 5 meters in diameter. During operation, the field extends 2 meters in front and behind the platform,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  meters past each side edge and 5 meters overhead. Also mounted on the platform is a stun-ray projector (functions as a stun rifle with 100 shots). Since the force field is polarized, the stun ray projector may be fired through the force field and yet the field still protects anyone or anything within it. The platform, force-field generator, and stun-ray projector are powered by a special atomic energy cell good for 50 hours of continuous operation of all powered devices.

When found, the defense platform is in perfect condition. However, the GM should use his judgement as to whether or not any damage to the platform occurs as the transport unit is forced open. Also, the platform is much too large to remove from the tunnel through any exits the characters have found, so it will be left to the GM to determine if the players manage to tunnel, blast, or otherwise make an opening to the surface to remove the device.

#### FINAL NOTES TO THE GM

This scenario has been left open-ended; the GM may alter or augment it in any way he sees fit. With escape shafts occurring every two kilometers, there is ample opportunity for entrance into the tunnel; thus, the GM may include more encounters. For a more advanced adventure, the subsection control stations may be deemed operational, thus making possible such things as encounters with robot units upon entry into the tunnel (the opening of an emergency escape shaft could summon engineering or security robots), active resistance by 'bot units at control stations, even the actual operation of sub-trains and/or subsidiary equipment. For very advanced scenarios, include main section control stations and make them operational, including a great number of robotic units. Need more action? Include wreckages of sub-trains with fantastic cargos. Anything is possible — just remember that the key to a successful adventure is play balance.



# Dragon's Bestiary

## Rhaumbusun

Created by Victor Selby  
and Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-3  
ARMOR CLASS: 6  
MOVE: 9"  
HIT DICE: 1+2  
% IN LAIR: 30%  
TREASURE TYPE: *O, possible Q or R*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Gaze*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
SIZE: *S (2-2½ feet long)*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: *III/65+2 per hp (adult); 30+1 per hp (young)*

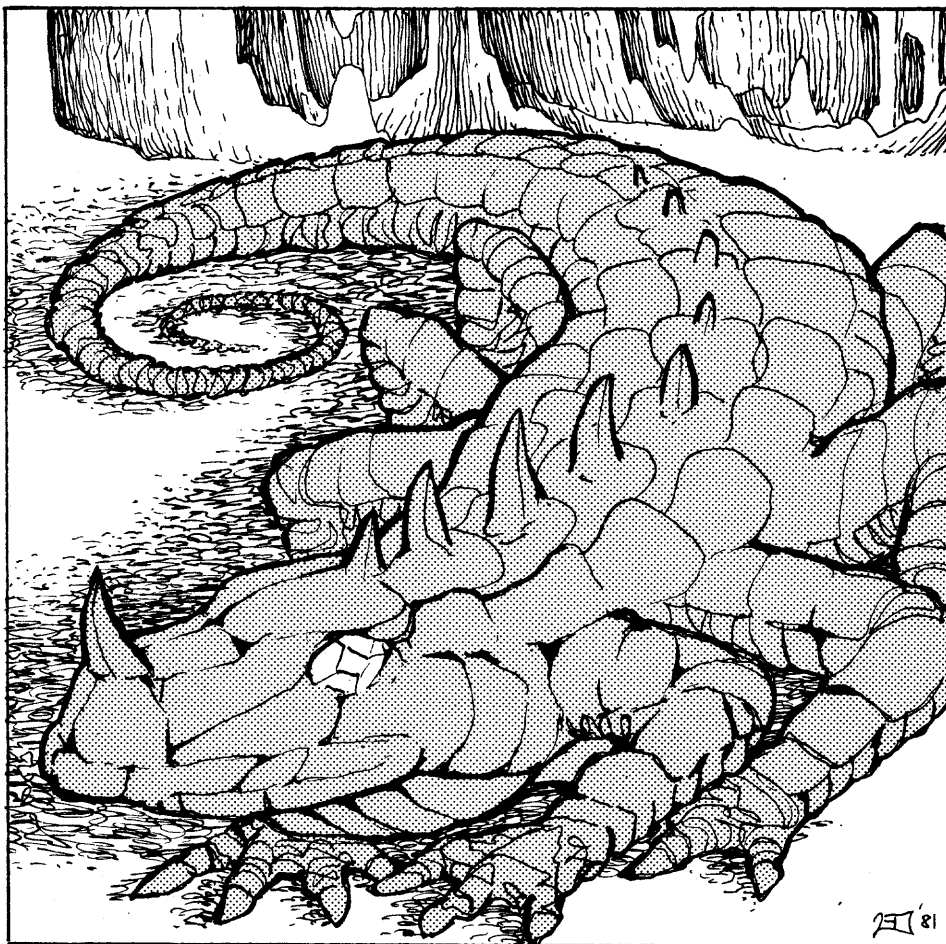
Rhaumbusun are small, reptilian creatures usually found in dry, warm climes. They are probably related to basilisks, but have substantially different physical and magical properties. Rhaumbusun tend to be cowardly, preferring to avoid a fight if possible. If forced into battle, they will rely primarily on their gaze attack.

A Rhaumbusun can affect one creature per round with its gaze; if the affected creature fails its saving throw, it will become paralyzed for 3-12 turns. The range of the gaze is 4" and eye contact is necessary for it to have effect. Mirrors will not reflect the gaze, but the first-level illusionist spell *Gaze Reflection* may be used to turn the creature's power against itself.

The rhaumbusun's gaze does not extend into the astral or ethereal planes. It cannot be hooded or "turned off" by the beast itself; many unfortunate creatures perish as a result of chance encounters with rhaumbusun. (Once paralyzed, victims are easy prey for enemies.) The gaze will not affect other rhaumbusun.

The rhaumbusun will also bite foes if surprised or hard pressed. It can bite only the target of its gaze attack (if within range), once in the same round.

Rhaumbusun will be encountered as either a mated pair or a mated pair and one offspring (young have 1-4 hit points, bite for 1-2 points of damage, and victims get +2 on saving throws against their gaze). Powerful characters such as wizards and high priests sometimes keep



rhaumbusun as pets or guards.

A rhaumbusun lair is usually a small, dark and dry cave in a hidden or remote location. Scattered about it are odds and ends the creatures have collected, generally worthless but shiny objects (the sort of thing highly prized by rhaumbusun). Sometimes such a hoard will contain precious metal or even cut gems. Rhaumbusun always fight to the death to defend their mate and their lair. A lair is inhabited only to rear young, and will contain either a mated pair and an egg (60% chance) or a mated pair and its young (40% chance). If the egg or offspring is disturbed, both parents will bite at +1 to hit and damage. (Rearing young takes one summer season; young are born after 41-48 days and are weak, so that the parents must watch over them for 20 days or so until they are fully grown.)

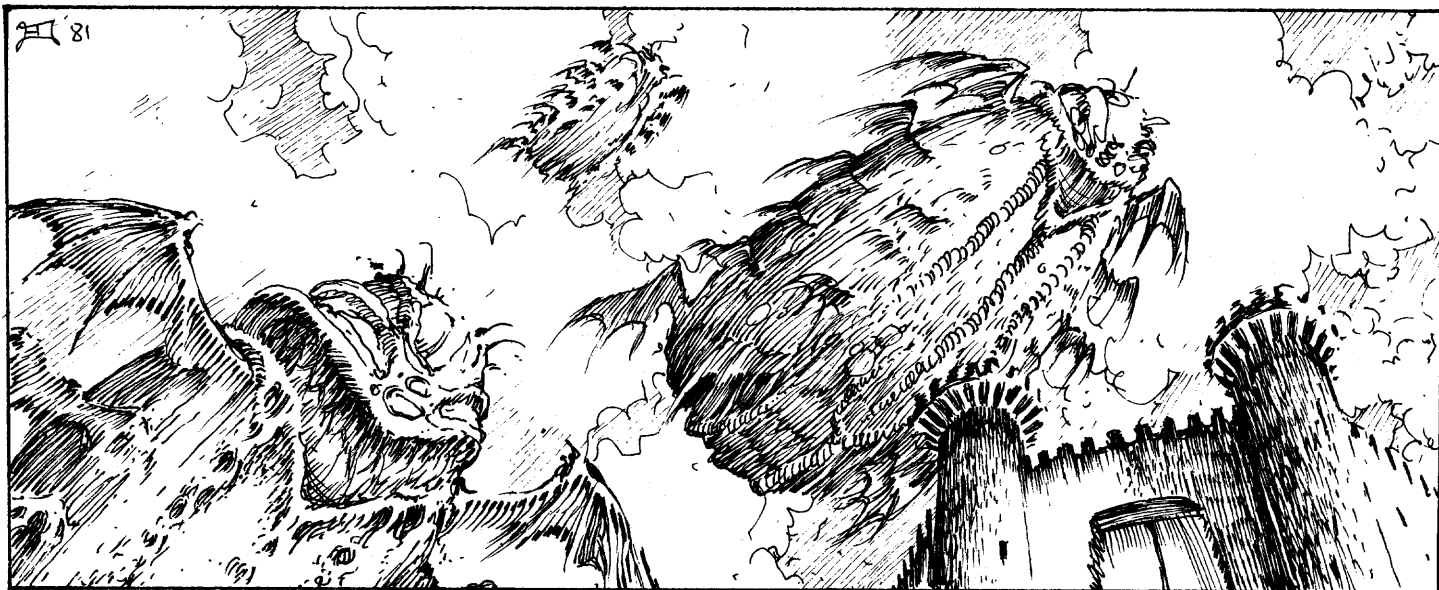
Rhaumbusun communicate through a

series of clicks and hisses. When the creature is in danger, a rhaumbusun's foot-long tail will flip from side to side in agitation. Rhaumbusun eat plants (most are especially fond of fireweed and spruce buds), bark, and nuts.

The Rhaumbusun is not graceful. Its stubby legs curl slightly underneath its body, giving it a scuttling gait that allows creatures within 6" to hear its approach.

A rhaumbusun resembles a miniature basilisk, save that its body is covered in glittering colored scales (males are predominantly purple, females orange, and young a dusty red).

A rhaumbusun's eyes resemble small, clear, many-faceted gems. If the eyes are taken from the body intact and preserved (frozen or kept from air by immersion in oil or wine), they are worth up to 200 gp each to an alchemist or wizard, for they are of use in magical inks and potions related to paralyzation.



# Pelins

Created by Lewis Pulsipher

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: 2-8  
 ARMOR CLASS: 9  
 MOVE: 24"  
 HIT DICE: *See below*  
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*  
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Regeneration, immune to gas*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
 SIZE: *L*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

These are air-dwelling creatures of great size. They extract hydrogen and helium gas from sand and water which is picked up on the shores of seas or lakes. They are not found in regions devoid of large bodies of water. The gas is contained in the body of the creature, which resembles the envelope of a blimp or rigid airship. Several bones grow along the ventral (bottom) surface inside the skin enable the body to maintain shape when the pelin is flying into the wind. The head of the pelin is near the front of the body, on the ventral surface.

Spread across the body surface, concentrated in the central area and on either side, are small wings which can propel the creature at up to 24". The pelin, however, prefers to drift with the wind rather than fly.

Owing to problems of expansion and contraction of the gas which supports the pelin's body, the creature is found only in climes where temperatures do

not vary widely in the course of a day.

Using its keen eyesight to good advantage, the pelin eats air microbes, sea plankton, the leafy tops of tall trees, and if it is very hungry it may eat meat. The mouth contains fine strainers or screens which enable the pelin to take sustenance from seemingly "lifeless" air or water. Some of the air sucked in is used to maintain proper pressure inside the creature. Ingested water is expelled when the pelin exhales.

Pelins are peaceful creatures, but can be fierce when defending themselves or their young. They do have enemies, but fortunately most dragons and dragon-like creatures do not eat pelins; some scholars speculate that the gas disturbs the predator. Gas-breathing dragons, especially the green, occasionally attack pelins, even though the pelins are unaffected by gas attacks of any sort.

When a pelin has sustained 50% damage, it is unable to maintain altitude and must drift down to ground level/sea level, where it remains until it recovers. This does not take long, for pelins regenerate at the rate of one hit point per hour.

Despite the presence of hydrogen in their bodies, pelins will not normally catch fire because the skin is not combustible. It is only when hydrogen (not helium) and oxygen mix that burning can take place. Consequently, if there is a large hole in a pelin (a small one is immediately sealed by the skin, much as a self-sealing gasoline tank would act) and a flame is placed near the hole, the hydrogen may catch fire. Some pelins, however, especially larger ones, are entirely filled with helium and do not burn at all. The percentage of helium inside a pelin's body increases with size and age. Infants and young (see chart below) are at least 40% helium, so that the chance of

igniting hydrogen is never greater than 60%. The percentage of helium increases to 60-80% in adults and old pelins, and is at least 80% (and usually 100%) for an ancient pelin.

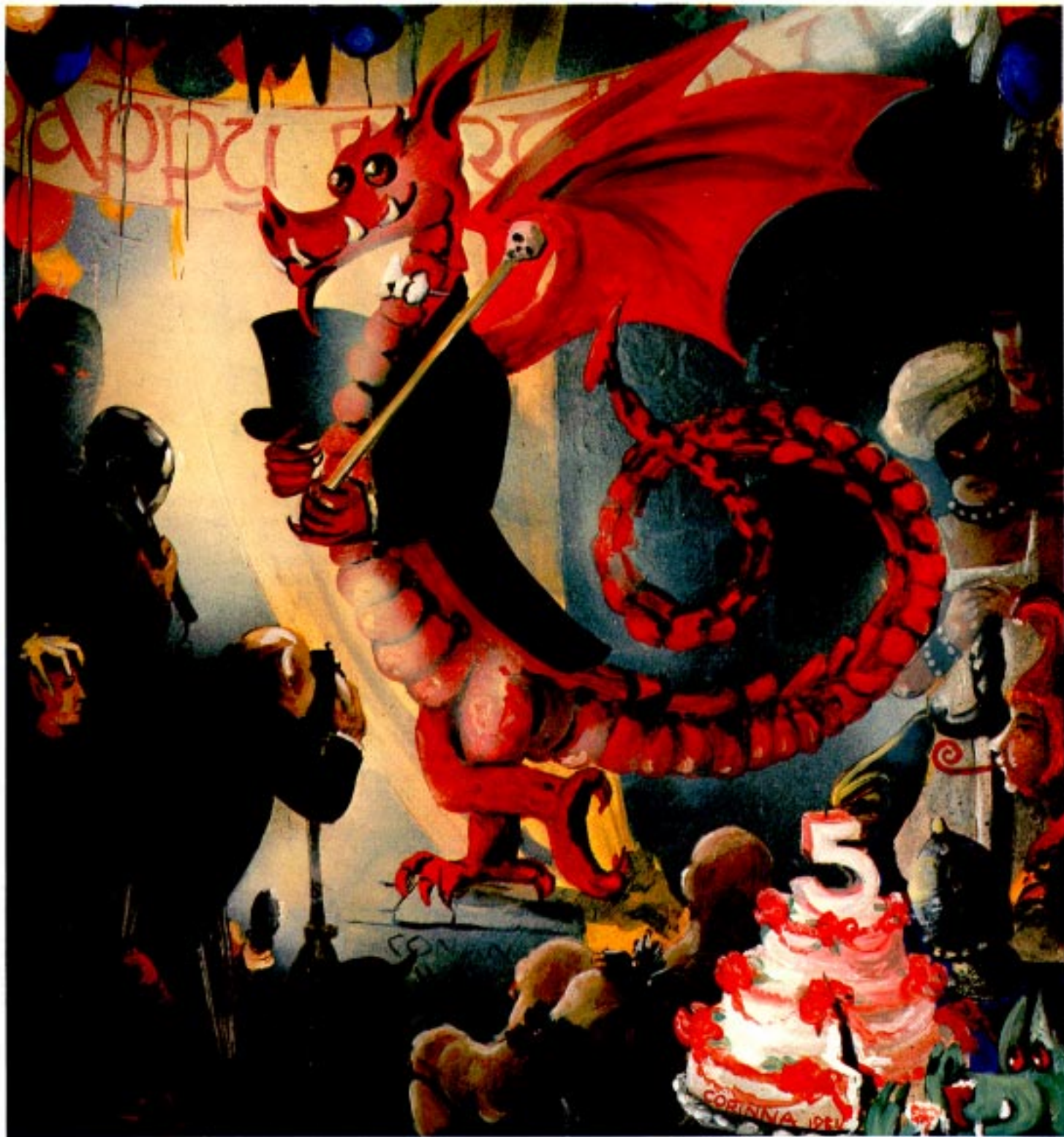
The age of a pelin is determined by a roll of d10. Its hit dice are twice that number; i.e., an infant will have either 2 or 4 hit dice, an adult will have 10 or 12, and an ancient pelin will have 18 or 20 hit dice. The pelin can carry 500 gp (50 pounds) for each year of age. The damage from its attack (bite) varies with age.

| Die roll | Age (years)     | Damage |
|----------|-----------------|--------|
| 1-2      | infant (5-10)   | 1-4    |
| 3-4      | young (15-20)   | 1-6    |
| 5-6      | adult (25-30)   | 1-8    |
| 7-8      | old (35-40)     | 1-10   |
| 9-10     | ancient (45-50) | 1-12   |

Any time more than three pelins are encountered as a group, at least one of them will be a female. The maximum number of females in a group will never be greater than 50% of the population of the group. There is a 20% chance for each young or adult female in a group that she has given birth in the last five years, and thus will be accompanied by an infant who has not yet learned to support itself. (Up to five years of age, a pelin hitches a ride with its mother.) Such young are only a few feet long, not noticeable from a distance.

Infant pelins range from 30-80 feet in length and 10-30 feet in diameter. Those of young age are 100-150 feet long and 30-40 feet in diameter. Adult pelins are roughly 200 feet long and 50 in diameter. Ancient ones can reach 400 feet by 75.

Pelins have no treasure, but sometimes (30%) a material can be found in the intestinal tract of a non-infant which will be worth 100-1,000 gp. It is used in perfume-making.



## Party picture contest: In the eye of the beholder

Anyone who plays fantasy games knows that things aren't always what they appear to be. Take this painting, for instance: What you see in it is not necessarily all that's there.

And that was the point of our birthday contest in issue #50, when this party scene by Corinna Taylor made its first appearance. We asked you to count the number of creatures at the dragon's birthday celebration, and lots of you played along.

There were many imaginative responses, but Scott Storkel of

Conroe, Tex., impressed us most of all by listing, among other things, "13 beholders polymorphed into balloons." How did you know that, Scott? (And how come we didn't think of it first?)

So what's the "right" number of creatures? To tell you the truth, we can't declare a winner yet, because Scott got us to thinking, and we're still finding things we didn't see before, like the invisible stalker on the dragon's nose, and the rabbit in the dragon's top hat, and the...



# KNOCK, KNOCK!

## The history of siege warfare

by Michael Kluever

The besieging of castles became a science during the Middle Ages. Four principal methods were employed: mining, escalade, blockade, and the destruction of fortress walls by siege artillery. Each of these methods required specific techniques, and had distinct advantages and disadvantages. Sieges that relied totally upon one attack method were rarely successful.

### Mining

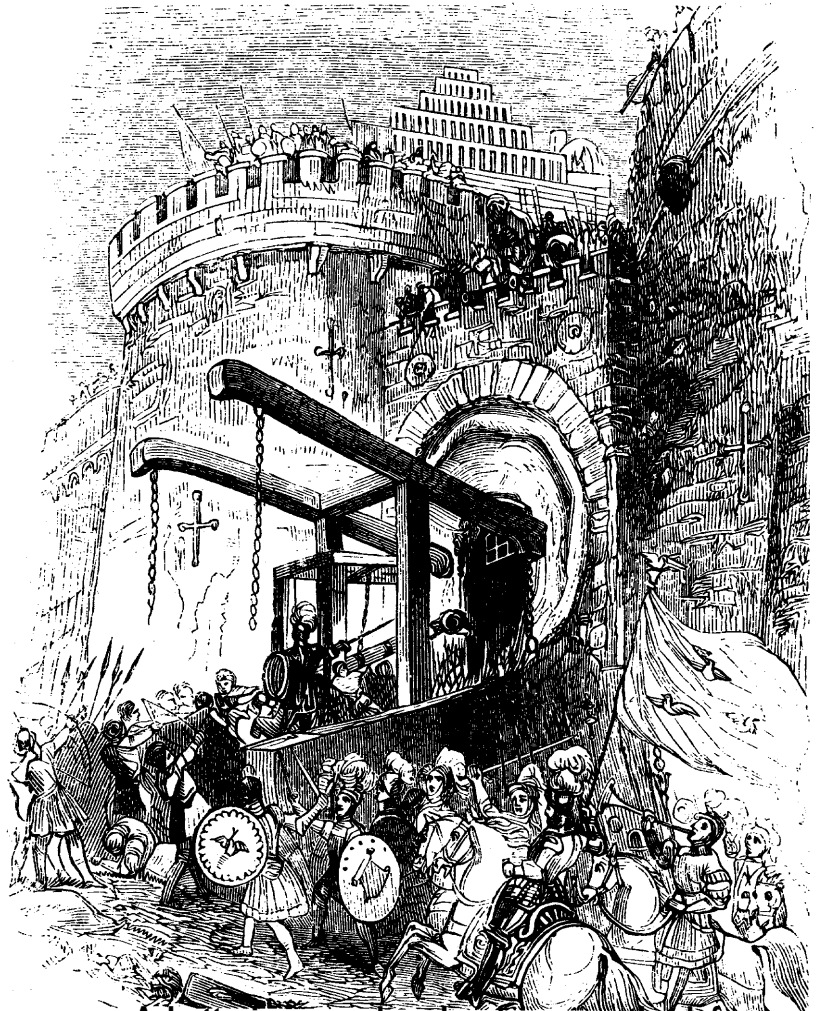
Mining is an ancient art. The Assyrians made effective use of tunneling cavities and undermining foundations of great ancient fortresses (920-586 B.C.). Special sapper (miner) units were part of the Assyrian army.

The siege tactic of mining consisted of digging a tunnel from the besieging line to an area under a portion of a fortress wall or tower, at which place a large cavern would then be hollowed out. The mine roof would be shored up as the tunnel was constructed to prevent any subsidence of the soil above the besiegers which might alert the defenders to the tunnel's existence. The completed

cavern would then be packed with flammable materials that had been soaked in animal fat or petroleum. When the material was set afire, the blaze would burn the shoring, which would cause the ground to collapse and a portion of the wall to fall. In the 15th century, gunpowder was frequently detonated beneath the walls, producing even more dramatic effects.

Miners were also used for work above the ground. Under covering fire, miners would work their way to the base of the castle wall. Using picks, they would weaken rather than breach the wall, to avoid having the wall fall before the miners could leave the area. A fire of brushwood or some well-aimed blows from a battering ram or a catapult would complete the destruction of the wall. Corners were especially susceptible to this type of attack. One remedy found useful by castle defenders was to replace rectangular towers with circular ones.

Mining, although effective, could be countered and defeated. Fortresses designed with moats or those built on marshland were particularly difficult to undermine. The enlargement and deepening of the wall foundations provided a



A battering ram breaks down castle defenses

considerable outward slope which made the miners' task more tedious. The deeper the tunnel and the more time required for construction, the greater was the chance for its collapse or detection.

The most effective defense against mining, however, was countermining — the digging of a shaft from the inside of the castle to intercept the attackers' tunnel. Through this shaft the defenders could break through, overpower the miners, and then seize and destroy the tunnel. Another method of destroying the tunnel was to direct floodwaters or fire and smoke into the besieger's tunnels.

Countermining was not without its perils for the defenders. If the attackers' tunnel was not taken and destroyed, the besiegers could be defeated and the countermine secured as an entrance into the castle. Another danger of the countermine would be the further weakening of the fortress walls, possibly resulting in their collapse just as the attackers had intended.

One means of detecting the presence of a mine was to enlist people with extraordinary hearing abilities to listen for sounds of digging. A more reliable form of detection was the placement of pans



of water on the ground at suspected mining locations. Vibrations seen on the surface of the water could be an indication of underground mining activity.

Mining was the safest and the most effective of the four siege alternatives. Its main disadvantage was the great length of time consumed in the operation. Mining alone seldom achieved the capitulation of a fortress, but often was instrumental in its fall.

In 1215, on the second day of King John's attack on Rochester Castle, the king ordered all the smiths of Canterbury, 30 miles away, to make as many pickaxes as quickly as they could. The pickaxes were issued to miners, who then tunneled a large cavern beneath one of the castle's square-angled turrets. Grease, obtained from forty bacon pigs, was used to ignite a fire, which burned the tunnel's shoring timbers, causing the collapse of the tower. The breach was gallantly and successfully (for the moment) defended by the garrison, but the cost of lives destroyed morale within the fortress. The castle surrendered after 48 days of siege.

Mining was not always successful. At the siege of Carcassonne in 1240, the attackers' mine, directed at the barbican gate, was detected. A countermine was dug and a strong wall of stones was constructed inside the barbican. When the

attackers set the fire inside their tunnel and collapsed the barbican wall, they were met with an inner wall.

The attackers, undaunted, began to dig a tunnel toward a wall turret. Another countermine cut off this attempt and, following a bloody underground battle, the tunnel was seized and destroyed by the defenders.

Three other attackers' tunnels were detected, and the defenders of Carcassonne built palisade walls behind the part of the wall being undermined. Each time a portion of the wall collapsed, the attackers were met with a new wall behind it. In the end, the siege was abandoned.

## Escalade

The oldest method of besieging a castle, and certainly the most costly in terms of loss of lives to the attacker, was the escalade, the scaling of walls in a general assault. The use of the scaling ladder originated in ancient times. At the siege of Deshashe (24th century B.C.), Egyptian forces scaled the walls with ladders. A 23rd century B.C. Egyptian drawing illustrates a mobile scaling ladder resting on two wheels, which allowed for its quick movement over the field of fire to the fortress wall. The Assyrians, in contrast, favored escalade in order to draw defenders away from their battering rams, and to take advantage of the defenders' concentration against the siege machines by suddenly scaling a lesser defended wall.

The lattice medieval scaling ladder had several refinements over its ancient cousins — steel tips to plant them firmly in the ground, combined with hooks which dug into the wall.

During an escalade, it was a race between the attacker to climb up and over the wall before the defender could dislodge and push away the ladder. The survival of the scaling troops depended more on speed and nimbleness than on courage and dedication. The ladder must be ascended quickly, and also, agility in

climbing into the tower was a necessity. Hands which suddenly appeared on the battlements were chopped off, heads split open. The falling bodies of comrades who preceded them was a hazard to escalating troops, in addition to boiling water, burning straw and blinding lime poured over the wall at the point of attack by the defenders.

The escalade was the least often used method of attacking castles. The cost to the attacker in manpower frequently outweighed the potential for victory. However, when used in conjunction with other forms of attack, the escalade could be effective, especially if the element of surprise could be achieved.

## Blockade

The least costly in lives, at least to the attacker, was the blockade. The first step was to extend besieging lines until the castle was completely surrounded. If the blockade was effective, the defenders could not escape and reinforcements could not be brought into the castle. Next, the surrounding countryside was scoured for all foodstuffs, securing necessary rations for the attackers and denying the same to the defenders, should they successfully sally out on a search for provisions.

The final step was to wait. Eventually, the attackers hoped, the garrison rations would be depleted and starvation would force them to fight or to capitulate. However, more than one blockade siege failed because the garrison's well-stocked provisions lasted longer than those of the besiegers.

There were dangers to the unwary besieger, such as a surprise sally from the castle which could cause many casualties, destroy investiture obstacles, and possibly allow the defenders to capture supplies and food. Also, reinforcements could pin the besieger between two opposing forces — and even lead to the besieger becoming the besieged.

But the greatest enemy of the besieger was time. There are numerous accounts



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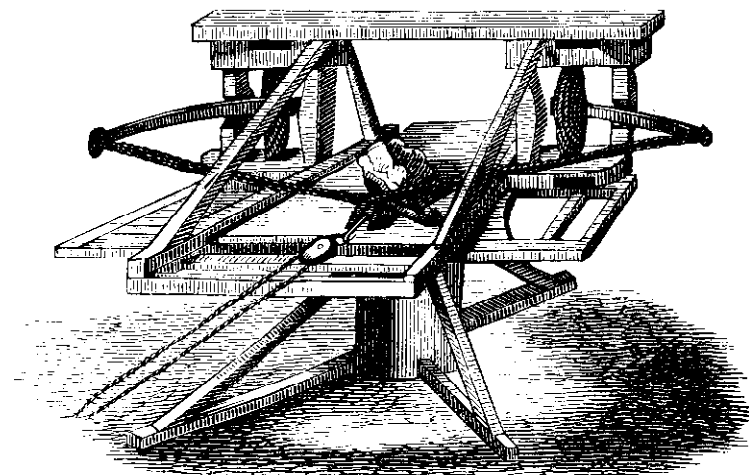
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### The ballista

of garrisons holding out for months, even years. Few attackers could afford to devote great amounts of materials and manpower for great periods of time. Troops needed to be supplied with food and pay, and serfs and vassals had fields back home to farm. Boredom caused a heavy desertion rate.

#### Siege Artillery

As soon as men banded together to form cities, defensive walls were erected. Whether these walls took the form of mounds of dirt, wooden stockades or stone walls, they represented substantial barriers for an attacker to penetrate. In the end, victory or retreat often depended upon the besieger's ability to breach the walls with artillery.

Medieval siege artillery saw the continuation (or reintroduction) of two forms of artillery, tension weapons and torsion machines. In addition, a new principle was added — counterpoise, or counter-balance.

**The ballista** resembled a giant cross-bow. The rope bowstring was laboriously drawn back by winches, and a long-shafted spear or bolt was placed in the center groove. When the rope was released, the spear was projected forward at a high velocity. A stone-launching version had a pouch at the midpoint of the bowstring.

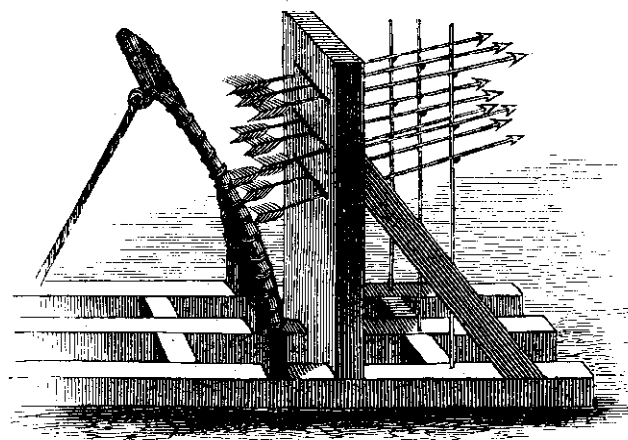
A large ballista could propel bolts weighing up to 50 pounds, at ranges in excess of 400 yards, with a shattering impact. Because of its great accuracy, ballista firepower could be concentrated on a single area. The weapon could also be utilized at nearly point-blank range. When a spear was fired from a ballista into massed troops, it penetrated many "like fowls on a spit," according to one historian's account.

The springal, also known as the fallich, was a tension siege weapon much like the ballista. A plank was bent backward by winch-tightened cords. When

released, the plank shot forward, propelling a ballista-type missile. Not possessing the power or the accuracy of a catapult or ballista, it proved a favorite naval weapon in both ancient and medieval times because of its ability to launch missiles of Greek fire, an incendiary composition first used by Byzantine Greeks (see below).

The earliest ballistas are credited to the scientists of Dionysius the Elder, ruler of the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily. These early machines fired arrows which were not much longer than those of a bowman. By making the drawing and releasing of the arrow a matter of mechanics rather than pure manpower, more powerful machines soon emerged. The bow sections were built of composite materials: a wood core surmounted by a tension layer of animal sinew in front and a compression layer of horn in the back.

Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, subsidized the development of the torsion spring, which turned the ballista into a fearsome long-range weapon. Stones weighing as much as 170 pounds and arrows 25 feet in length could be fired at targets up to 700



### The springal

yards away (the maximum range of an archer being 450 yards). The power of the ballista is seen at the siege of Gaza in 332 B.C., where Alexander the Great was struck in the neck by an arrow which first pierced both his shield and breastplate.

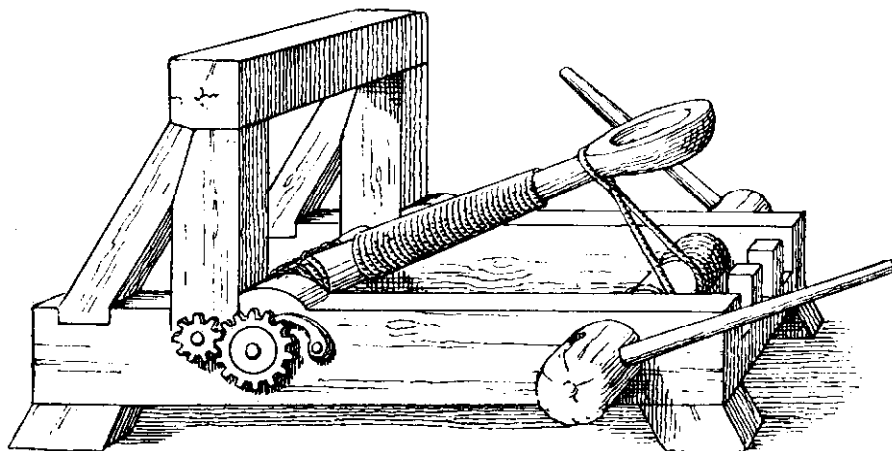
#### The catapult

The catapult, the most famous of pre-gunpowder artillery, is first mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible during the eighth century B.C. Uzziah describes "engines invented by cunning men, to be on towers and upon bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal."

The Athenians made effective use of catapults during the Peloponnesian War. In 398 B.C., the City of Motya was taken by siege towers containing both battering rams and catapults.

Alexander the Great placed catapults at various levels of 150-foot-high siege towers, employed during the siege of Tyre in 332 B.C. The crossing of the Jaxartes River against the Asythians was successfully accomplished due to a continuous catapult barrage.

The Romans also made extensive use of the catapult and ballista. Vegetius mentions that a fourth-century Roman



### One form of catapult

Legion might contain as many as ten catapults and sixty ballistas. During the Viking siege of Paris (A.D. 885-886), both sides made extensive use of catapults.

The catapult, also known as the onager, mangon, mangonel or sling, is an example of the use of torsion. Its framework was built from heavy timber. A mass of twisted rope was strung across near the front. In the twisted rope was secured one end of a pivoting beam having a spoon-shaped container at its other end. The free end was pulled backwards and down by a type of capstan or large winch located at the end of the frame, against the resistance of the twisted ropes. The stone was placed into the spoon-shaped cavity. By releasing a catch, the beam was pulled forward and upward by the force of the twisted ropes, hurling a stone toward its target.

The catapult could handle larger projectiles than the ballista. It did not possess the ballista's accuracy, however. Also, a wet or dry day would have an adverse effect on the ropes, making the machine even more difficult to operate dependably.

The ranges of catapults varied with size. Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey's intensive study of these medieval machines led to the construction of several. His smaller catapults could throw a one-pound stone 200-300 yards. Larger units were capable of hurling an eight-pound round stone a distance of 350-360 yards. The same machine with a sling fitted to its arm increased the effective range to 500 yards.

## The trebuchet

The third type of siege machine, the trebuchet, utilizing the principle of counterpoise, was introduced at the end of the twelfth century. A heavy weight or group of weights was hung from one end of a long, heavy beam. A sling or spoon cup, which held a projectile, was located at the opposite end. Winches drew the missile-firing end downward, raising the weights upward. When the winch catch was released, the weighted end plunged

to the earth, propelling the missile upward and towards a target.

Range could be controlled by varying the amount of weight or the height to which the weight was raised. A trebuchet with a 50-foot arm and a 20,000-pound counterpoise could hurl a 200- or 300-pound stone a distance of 300-350 yards.

While not a particularly accurate weapon, the tremendous impact with which the missiles of the trebuchet struck was sufficient to continue its popularity for some time after the perfection of the cannon.

## The cannon

Until late in the fourteenth century, cannons were too small to play an effective part in siege warfare. Early cannon could fire only small balls, about four an hour (the same as the trebuchet), and proved to be as dangerous to the user as to the target.

In 1377, a cannon capable of firing a 200-pound ball was used at the siege of Ardes. A weapon of this size, although able to do great damage, was still unreliable, expensive to produce and extremely difficult to transport over great distances.

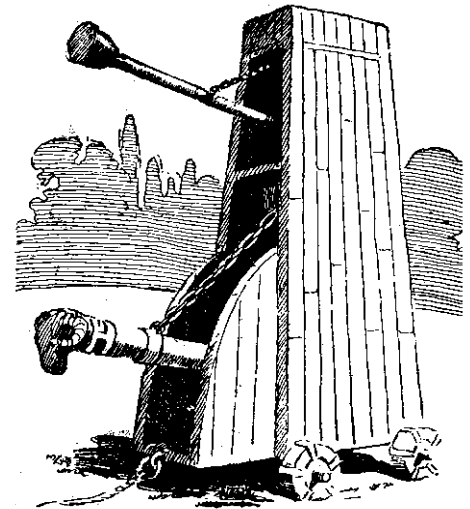
During the fifteenth century, cannons large enough to knock down existing castle walls were developed. In 1424, English artillery battered down the walls of LeMans in a few days. The French took sixty fortresses in the year of 1449 alone, many surrendering as soon as they saw the besiegers' big cannon.

## The battering ram

The battering ram also played a key role in siege warfare. The earliest known battering ram is depicted on an Egyptian wall painting from the tomb of Khety (2100 B.C.). It consists of a long pole with a bronze spearhead held by three Egyptian soldiers, with an enclosure protecting its occupants. The pole is being thrust upward and appears designed to pry away at the masonry around stones.

The Assyrians made extensive use of the ram. During the reign of King Ashurnasirpal (920 B.C.), battering rams consisted of six wheels and a body composed of rectangular wicker shields. Below a domed turret protruded an axeblade-shaped, metal-tipped battering pole. A lighter, four-wheeled version consisted of a covered rounded turret with a large iron spear projecting from its front.

The medieval battering ram possessed a number of refinements over those of the ancients. Its strength came from heavy timbers, frequently cut from the largest tree available. Its head was fitted with a metal knob or point, or a facsimile of a ram's head. The timber hung from large chains or ropes anchored into the roof. The roof, made of wood and covered with hides, was called a penthouse.



**Greek battering ram**

It was designed to protect its users from arrows, stones and boiling water. The hides could be kept wet, lessening the chance of fire damage.

## The siege tower

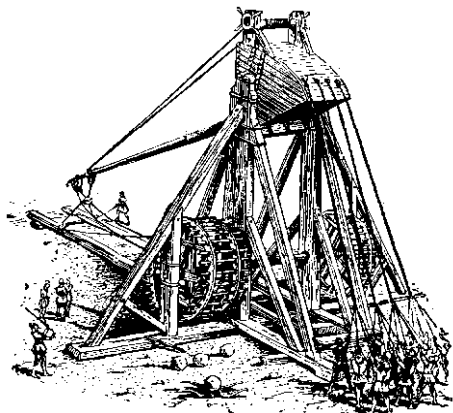
In order to clear a portion of a castle wall of its defenders so assault troops could secure the position, a higher wall of some sort was necessary. Add wheels to such a tower (for mobility) and a drawbridge (for attackers to cross onto a fortress wall) and you have the siege tower, also known as the belfry.

The earliest siege towers date back to 2100 B.C. These were stationary towers, without wheels, from which archers could fire down on the defenders to cover a general attack. There is no indication that any attempt was made to push these machines up to the fortress wall.

The medieval tower was mobile, designed to provide maximum protection for its occupants until the moment of assault. Frequently three stories high, it was always constructed to be higher than the walls being attacked. The lowest level harbored troops who pushed the huge, wheeled tower into position. Assault troops waited in the second level for the lowering of the drawbridge. The top story held archers, whose role was to sweep the defenders from the area of the wall attacked.

## Other weaponry

**The bore** consisted of a long shaft with a metal point. The opposite end was attached to an upright shaft by means of a rod. The point was placed against the wall and the shaft was slowly turned by a winch. The point drilled holes through joints in the masonry, loosening large stones. A penthouse enclosure protected the soldiers working the bore. Although the bore was lighter and easier to transport than the battering ram, much



**Trebuchet**

more effort and time were required to accomplish the same purpose.

**The petard**, an early limpet mine, was occasionally utilized to blow open gates or knock holes in walls. An iron pot filled with gunpowder (up to 15 pounds) was fixed to a board which prevented the spilling of the powder in transit. One or two hooks attached to the edges of the board enabled the bomb to be quickly attached to a wall or gate, by hanging it from heavy nails driven into the target if no other protrusions were available. A slow fuse gave the soldiers a chance to escape before it exploded.

**Greek fire** was also extensively used by both sides. Although some sources describe its exact composition as "unknown," it generally would have had to consist of a petroleum base for combustibility, pitch to lengthen burning time, sulfur to make it stick and quicklime for ignition on contact with water.

### Fighting back

Behind the fortress walls, the defenders were far from helpless. Their own ballistas and catapults took an enormous toll on the attackers and their siege machines. Defenders favored quicklime to blind assaulting troops. Boiling water and red-hot sand dropped onto attackers proved especially good at penetrating the chinks in their armor. "Stink pots" of burning sulfur were also effective. Boiling oil, even in days of old, was too valuable to waste on attackers unless absolutely necessary.

Many other means were also used to discourage besiegers. Large mattresses or a series of beams would be lowered over the area being battered by a ram. Grapnels or large pincers were lowered to intercept the head of the battering ram and deflect it upward to such an angle that it was rendered useless. Where a wall was in danger of being battered through, a second barrier was erected immediately behind the endangered section of the wall.

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# WANTED:

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Well, we asked for it.

When DRAGON magazine printed a letter in issue #46 from a reader who thought a Bounty Hunter character class would be a good idea, it was accompanied by a short response which said, in effect, okay, all you writers, show us your hunters.

The response to that response was, shall we say, bountiful.

Published herein are the three "best" Bounty Hunters out of a dozen or so that we received in the four months following the appearance of the letter. Each is distinctly different — in some respects, vastly different — from the other two. Taken as a whole, this three-part presentation illustrates how different people can develop the same concept into a unique piece of work.

The word "best" is used in quotation marks because we're really not in a position to tell you what "best" is. We chose

Bounty Hunter descriptions that seemed equitable, formidable, and most of all playable. The playability of a character or a campaign is something that only the people in that campaign can adequately define; all we can do is hope that at least one of these three Bounty Hunters is just as playable in your campaign as we felt it would be.

Printing three versions of the same character class may seem like a waste of space. Why don't we just publish one Bounty Hunter and leave it at that, like we've done with other non-player character classes in the past?

Well, first of all, we were sent a lot of Bounty Hunters, and we don't like to disappoint any more writers than we have to. Second of all, by printing three versions of the same NPC, we are (we think) virtually guaranteeing that any DM will find at least one of the versions to be to his liking and appropriate for his campaign. Or perhaps a fourth version can be created by combining elements of these three. The next step is up to you. — KM

# I: NOT A VERY NICE GUY

by Scott Bennie

The wizard Herek sat in the corner, drinking his ale. He tapped on his staff of the magi nervously while he sipped the brew, as if he sensed some unseen menace lurking nearby. His companion, Pallar, scoffed at this nervousness; magicians were perpetually uneasy, and besides, he was becoming apprehensive as well.

Suddenly the pungent odor of acid stabbed into nostrils. Pallar rose and drew his blade in one motion, but it was already too late. Herek let out a short scream, then slumped in a heap, dead, with an arrow of slaying lodged in his back. There was a hole burned through the wall behind them — the acid had done that — and through it Pallar glimpsed a figure escaping on a flying carpet. He mouthed some curses in the direction of the killer and then turned to the body of his friend.

A note was tied to the shaft of the arrow buried in the mage's back: "Revenge now belongs to the Lords of the Dragon, through the courtesy and efforts of the Master of the Bountiful Hunt." There were a few other words, but they were already unreadable, smeared by wizard's blood...

A Bounty Hunter is a character who specializes in the killing of other characters or creatures for profit. A Bounty Hunter who fights only non-humanoid creatures must be neutral in alignment, while those who fight and slay humanoids must be neutral evil.

Humans and half-orc characters may be Bounty Hunters, as long as they possess the following minimum ability scores: strength 15, intelligence 13, dexterity 14 and constitution 14. If strength, dexterity and constitution are all 16 or higher, the character gains a 10% bonus to earned experience.

A Bounty Hunter is in some ways a combination of ranger and assassin. The character is not capable of having exceptional strength, but uses the combat and saving-throw tables for fighters and can use all magic items usable by the fighter class. In addition, Bounty Hunters have the back stabbing ability of a thief of equal level, and they are treated as rangers for determination of initial number of weapons and weapon proficiency.

Bounty Hunters who do not slay humanoids can rise only as high as the ninth level of experience, while other hunters can aspire to 13th level, The Great Hunter. When a character gains enough experience points to reach 13th level, he does not automatically receive the title, but must first track down and kill whomever currently holds the title of The Great Hunter. An aspirant who ignores this requirement or demonstrates cowardice has shamed the other members of his profession, and from that day forward will be marked for death by all other Bounty Hunters he encounters, or who seek him out. Killing a "coward" in this manner brings almost as much prestige to the killer as killing The Great Hunter himself. At no other time will one Bounty Hunter raise a weapon against another, except if fighting another hunter is necessary to bring about completion of a job.

Bounty Hunters receive experience points for killing creatures and characters, just as any other character would, and they can also gain experience points through the accumulation of bounty monies. However, gold pieces or other valuables or magic items will never count directly toward earned experience except when they are received as payment for a job well done.

| Experience Points | Experience Level | 8-Sided Dice For |        | Level Title       |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|--------|-------------------|
|                   |                  | Hit              | Points |                   |
| 0-2,500           | 1                | 1                |        | Seeker            |
| 2,501-5,000       | 2                | 2                |        | Shadow            |
| 5,001-12,500      | 3                | 3                |        | Trophyman         |
| 12,501-25,000     | 4                | 4                |        | Hunter            |
| 25,001-50,000     | 5                | 5                |        | Collector         |
| 50,001-100,000    | 6                | 6                |        | Exterminator      |
| 100,001-175,000   | 7                | 7                |        | Master Collector  |
| 175,001-300,000   | 8                | 8                |        | Bounty Hunter     |
| 300,001-450,000   | 9                | 9                |        | B. H., 9th level  |
| 450,001-600,000   | 10               | 10               |        | B. H., 10th level |
| 600,001-750,000   | 11               | 11               |        | Master Hunter     |
| 750,001-900,000   | 12               | 12               |        | Death Hunter      |
| 900,000+          | 13               | 13               |        | Great Hunter      |



wear leather, studded leather, ring mail, scale mail, or chain mail armor, preferring the first three types. They can use any weapon but will never carry a shield. A hunter has proficiency with 2 weapons at first level and gains proficiency in one weapon every 2 levels thereafter.

| Experience Points                                                             | Exper. Level | 8-Sided Dice for |        | Level Title      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------|------------------|
|                                                                               |              | Accumulated Hit  | Points |                  |
| 0-2,200                                                                       | 1            | 1                |        | Searcher         |
| 2,201-4,500                                                                   | 2            | 2                |        | Tracker          |
| 4,501-9,000                                                                   | 3            | 3                |        | Trailer          |
| 9,001-15,000                                                                  | 4            | 4                |        | Finder           |
| 15,001-23,000                                                                 | 5            | 5                |        | Search Leader    |
| 23,001-41,000                                                                 | 6            | 6                |        | Searcher Esquire |
| 41,001-95,000                                                                 | 7            | 7                |        | Searcher Lord    |
| 95,001-150,000                                                                | 8            | 8                |        | Hunter           |
| 150,001-260,000                                                               | 9            | 9                |        | Hunter Esquire   |
| 260,001-530,000                                                               | 10           | 10               |        | Hunter Lord      |
| 530,001-800,000                                                               | 11           | 11               |        | Bounty Hunter    |
| 800,001-1,100,000                                                             | 12           | 11+1             |        | B. H., 12th      |
| 1,100,001-1,400,000                                                           | 13           | 11+2             |        | B. H., 13th      |
| 1,400,001-1,700,000                                                           | 14           | 11+3             |        | B. H., 14th      |
| 1,700,001-2,000,000                                                           | 15           | 11+4             |        | B. H., 15th      |
| 300,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 15th. |              |                  |        |                  |

Bounty hunters gain 1 h.p. per level after the 11th.

Special abilities

All Bounty Hunters are natural woodsmen, having to live off the land in the pursuit of their quarry. They have tracking ability like a ranger, although not to the same degree of expertise, in outdoor environments. The base chance to be able to successfully track a creature or character outdoors is 15% for a first-level hunter, and it increases by 3% per level up to 30% at sixth level. Then it increases 5% per level until reaching a maximum of 100% at 20th level. A Bounty Hunter can always find edible roots

and berries, wild game, and potable water if such items are available at all in the area.

Hunters have some thieving, or thief-like, abilities. They are adept at setting traps, doing so at the same rate of success as a thief of equal level can find/remove traps. Bonuses for high dexterity as it applies to locating traps are also applicable for setting traps. Bounty Hunters are masters of camouflage in outdoor environments, and can hide in the wilderness as a thief of the same level can hide in shadows.

Bounty Hunters are only surprised on a roll of 1 on a d6 when operating in the wilderness, and in such terrain they can surprise others on a roll of 1-3 on a d6.

Although well able to defend themselves, most Bounty Hunters prefer to out-think their quarry rather than subdue or beat him/her/it into submission. Some have been known to wait for days in one spot, knowing their quarry was nearby and that sooner or later the trap would be sprung.

A Bounty Hunter is able to have followers beginning at the ninth level of experience. From ninth through 11th level, these followers can only be fighters, thieves or clerics of the same alignment as the hunter. A hunter begins with one follower for each 6 points of charisma, or each fraction thereof (i.e., a charisma of 13 would entitle the hunter to 3 followers), and can add that number of new followers upon attaining 10th and again at 11th level. Starting at 12th level, a hunter can gain one new follower per level for each 8 points of charisma, or fraction thereof, and these followers can be of any alignment.

Some Bounty Hunters work strictly on their own, trusting no one, and depend on an extensive system of contacts and double-checks for gathering information, in order to find and capture those for whom the authorities have offered a reward.

Bounty Hunters are a viable alternative to assassins for cases when a character doesn't deserve death for an action, but is in line for punishment of some sort. The Bounty Hunter, if played with fairness and consideration, can serve as an effective "avenger" or "sheriff" for the DM, which may become a deterrent to some of the silly and unfair acts performed by player characters on other NPC's.

# III: HE'S ON YOUR TRAIL

by Robert L. Tussey and Kenneth Strunk

The Bounty Hunter is a subclass of fighter, adept in the tracking and capture of fugitives from justice. Though they can be of any alignment, the majority are neutral and only 5% are chaotic.

A Bounty Hunter can be a human, elf (limited to 7th level), half-elf (8th level), dwarf (9th) or half-orc (10th). A hunter must

| Experience Points                                                             | Exper. Level | 10-Sided Dice for |        | Level Title   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
|                                                                               |              | Accumulated Hit   | Points |               |
| 0-2,250                                                                       | 1            | 1                 |        | Searcher      |
| 2,251-4,500                                                                   | 2            | 2                 |        | Trapper       |
| 4,501-10,000                                                                  | 3            | 3                 |        | Man-Tracker   |
| 10,001-20,000                                                                 | 4            | 4                 |        | Revenger      |
| 20,001-40,000                                                                 | 5            | 5                 |        | Hunter        |
| 40,001-90,000                                                                 | 6            | 6                 |        | Head Hunter   |
| 90,001-150,000                                                                | 7            | 7                 |        | Bounty Hunter |
| 150,001-225,000                                                               | 8            | 8                 |        | Manhunter     |
| 225,001-325,000                                                               | 9            | 9                 |        | Masterhunter  |
| 325,001-650,000                                                               | 10           | 9+3               |        | Hunter Lord   |
| 325,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 10th. |              |                   |        |               |

Bounty Hunters gain 3 h.p. per level after the 9th.

have a minimum strength of 9, intelligence 12, wisdom 12, charisma 13, dexterity 13 and constitution 14.

The experience-point table for Bounty Hunters is identical to that for rangers, in the number of x.p. needed to attain a certain level. However, hunters have 10-sided hit dice like a normal fighter. They also have the weapon proficiency of a fighter; however, at least one of the initial number of 4 weapons permitted the hunter must be a capture weapon. (Three types of capture weapons are described below.)

Special abilities

Tracking: A Bounty Hunter can track his quarry similar to a ranger. Underground, the hunter must have observed the creature to be tracked within 2 turns (20 minutes) of the commencement of tracking, and the hunter must begin tracking at a place where the creature was observed.

| Creature's action                  | Chance to track |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| going along normal passage or room | 50%             |
| passes through normal door         |                 |
| or uses stairs                     | 45%             |
| goes through a trap door           | 35%             |
| goes up or down a chimney          |                 |
| or through concealed door          | 25%             |
| passes through a secret door       | 15%             |

Outdoors there is a base 70% chance of a hunter being able to follow a creature, modified as follows:

|                                                                               |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| — for each creature above one in the party being tracked                      | +02% |
| — for every 24 hours which have elapsed between making the track and tracking | -15% |
| — for each hour of precipitation                                              | -30% |

**Charisma:** A Bounty Hunter gains a bonus of +2 to his effective charisma for questioning purposes at taverns, inns, or other large gatherings of people in an atmosphere which provides the opportunity for conversation. In any situation where a hunter is questioning to obtain information about his quarry, there is a 10% base chance that a member of the party being questioned will know the hunter or know of his reputation. This base percentage is adjusted upwards by +02% for each member of the party beyond the first; i.e., there is an 18% chance that one person in a five-member party will know the hunter. A reaction roll is made for that person without counting the hunter's usual bonus to charisma.

**Knockout:** A Bounty Hunter can choose to attempt a knockout blow on his victim, at the same rate of success as for an assassin of equal level performing an assassination. (Above 15th level, the percentages on the chart will increase 5% per level until reaching the maximum of 100%.) A successful knockout blow means the victim is unconscious for 1-10 rounds.

**Pulling punches:** During melee combat, hunters have the ability to pull their blows so that only half of actual damage (round down) is assessed against the victim. When a victim is reduced to zero hit points by a blow administered in this manner, the victim is unconscious for 1-10 rounds.

**Thief abilities:** Starting at second level, a Bounty Hunter can perform the thief skills of opening locks and picking pockets at

the same chance for success as a first-level thief. Advancement in these abilities is one level of thieving ability for every two levels the hunter rises, so that a 10th-level hunter (for instance) has the abilities of a fifth-level thief in these skills. Also starting at second level, the hunter can move silently and climb walls as a first-level thief; however, skill in these abilities advances on a level-for-level basis thereafter, so that a 10th-level hunter has the abilities of a ninth-level thief in these two skills.

**Capture weapons:** Every Bounty Hunter must be proficient in the use of at least one device described as a "capture weapon." Three such weapons are the net, the lasso and the bolas.

A net may be thrown (short range 10 feet, medium range 20 feet) or suspended. If it is thrown and the attempt results in a hit, the victim is entangled and immobile for 1-4 rounds thereafter.

A lasso can be thrown over distances of no less than 10 feet (the only distance which can be short range). Its limit for medium range is 20 feet, and long range extends to 30 feet. A successful hit indicates the victim is entangled for 1-4 rounds.

The bolas are a capture weapon which can be hurled over a longer distance than a lasso. Like the lasso, the minimum range is 10 feet, but for this weapon short range extends to 20 feet, medium range is 20-30 feet and long range extends to 40 feet. A hit means the victim is entangled for 1-4 rounds, as with the other two capture weapons; however, if the hit is made with an unmodified roll of 20, the target must attempt a saving throw vs. petrification. If the save is failed, the target will take 1-4 points of choking damage (in addition to being entangled) per round until he is disentangled or killed. If a throw of the bolas does not hit its intended target, the weapon has a chance to hit any other creatures in its flight path up to its maximum range.

Dexterity bonuses for missile combat apply to the use of hurled capture weapons. All of the capture weapons described above receive +1 to hit at short range and are -1 to hit at long range, in addition to any other bonuses or penalties.



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# Convention calendar

**GEN CON® XIV GAME CONVENTION, Aug. 13-16** — The nation's oldest regular gaming convention, to be held for the fourth straight year at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside between Racine and Kenosha, Wis. The event is sponsored by TSR Hobbies, Inc., with the Parkside Association of Wargamers (PAW) acting as official hosts at the tournament site. For more information, write to Gen Con XIV, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

**MASSCON '81, Aug. 22-23** — This event, the third annual, will be held at the University of Massachusetts Campus Center in Amherst, Mass. It is organized by the University of Massachusetts Strategy Games Club. Overnight lodging is available at the convention site at a cost of about \$20. For more information, contact MassCon director Dennis Wang, 11 Dickinson St., Amherst MA 01002.

**DENVENTION TWO, Sept. 3-7** — The 39th World Science Fiction Convention will be held at the Denver Hilton. C. L. Moore and Clifford D. Simak are scheduled to appear as guests of honor. Memberships can be purchased at the door for \$55. More information is available by contacting Denvention Two, P.O. Box 11545, Denver CO 80211, phone (303) 433-9774.

**GLASC VI (Greater Los Angeles Simulation Convention), Sept. 4-7** — To be located at the Student Union of California State University in Northridge, Calif. Tournaments, seminars, auctions, free gaming, and a dealer area are among the planned offerings. Pre-registration cost is \$6, admission fee at the door is \$8. Details are available from GLASC secretary L. Daniel, 20550 Wyandotte St., Canoga Park CA 91306.

**DunDraClone, Sept. 4-7** — A rescheduled and revised version of DunDraCon VI, originally scheduled to be held last February, which had to be cancelled because of a lack of a large enough facility to house the event. DunDraClone offers all the normal attractions: tournaments, miniatures contests, films, seminars, demonstrations, a large dealer area, and round-the-clock open gaming. The site is the Oakland Airport Hyatt. Admission for the weekend is \$15 by mail or at the door. One-day admissions will also be available at the door. Further details are obtainable by writing to DunDraCon, Inc., 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland CA 94618.

**GATEWAY 1981, Sept. 5-7** — A strategy-game convention and exposition, to be held at the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel, next to Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Admission is \$9.50 for advance pre-registration for all three days, \$11 at the door for three days, or \$7.50 at the door for one day only. Advance registrations must be postmarked by Aug. 22. For further information, contact GATEWAY, c/o Mark Snowden, 1864 Nutwood Place, Anaheim CA 92804.

**DRAGONFLIGHT, Sept. 11-13** — Sponsored by the Brass Dragon Society, P.O. Box 33872, Seattle WA 98153. The convention will feature role-playing tournaments, miniatures battles, a DM seminar, painting competitions, and a dealer area. Other activities will include the annual riddle competition, contests for designing tricks, traps, rooms, and monsters, and SCA demonstrations. The largest gaming convention in the Northwest, upwards of 1,000 persons are expected to attend. More information is available from the Brass Dragon Society at the above address.

**BABEL CONFERENCE '81, Sept. 25-27** — The third running of this StarTrek/science fiction/fantasy convention will take place at the Holiday Inn East, 3333 28th St. SE, Grand Rapids MI

49506. Tentative plans include an art show, a marathon film festival, and several seminars and panel discussions. Persons wishing to participate in or help organize such events should indicate their desire when first corresponding with BabelCon officials. Registration costs are \$15 for a three-day membership, \$6 for a one-day membership, and \$8 for a supporting membership. To register or request more information, write to Steve Harrison, BabelCon '81, 1355 Cornell SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506.

**URCON, Sept. 25-27** — Dr. Isaac Asimov and L. Sprague de Camp will appear at URCON, a simulation gaming and science-fiction convention scheduled for the University of Rochester in Rochester, N.Y. Tickets are \$8 until Aug. 1; \$10 before Sept. 24; \$12 at the door. Single-day tickets are \$6. For more information, write to URCON, Box 6647 River Station, Rochester NY 14627.

**SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '81, Oct. 10-11** — To be held at the University of South Florida in Tampa, sponsored by the Leviathan Wargaming Federation. All types of gaming competitions and seminars are scheduled. Duke Seifried of Heritage USA will be a special guest. More information is available by writing to Suncoast Skirmishes '81, P.O. Box 40123, St. Petersburg FL 33743, phone (weekends only) (813) 345-3321.

**RHEIN CON, Oct. 10-12** — The Sixth Annual Rhein Convention will be held at the Hainerberg Middle School in Wiesbaden, West Germany. Tournaments will be conducted in various board games, miniatures, and role-playing games. A small registration fee (under \$5) is payable at the door. For more information, contact CPT Jody Sherrill at 06332-6255 or SSG Gary Brode at 222L-7697/7694.

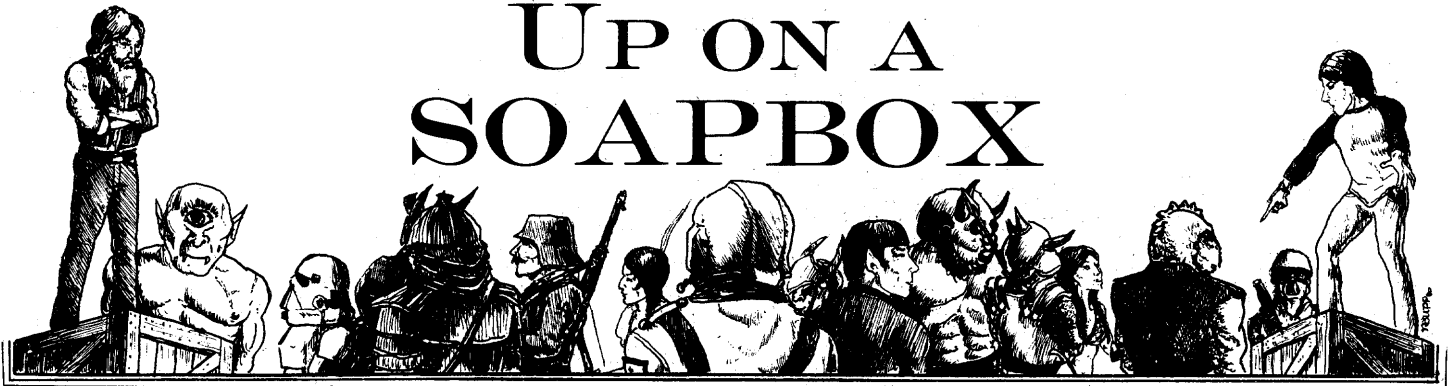
**CHAOTICON, Oct. 17-18** — D&D games, *RuneQuest* and more fantasy gaming will be held at the Sunnyvale Hilton Inn, Sunnyvale, Calif. Pre-registration is \$8 through Sept. 15; \$10 thereafter. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to ChaotiCon, P.O. Box 485, Campbell CA 95009.

**VOLCON II, Oct. 30-Nov. 1** — The second Yakima Valley Games Convention, featuring science-fiction and fantasy gaming and science-related personal hobbies. More information can be obtained from VolCon II coordinator Kenneth Peterson, 3605 Tieton Drive, Yakima WA 98902, phone (509) 575-2442 (office) or (509) 452-8838 (home).

**ARMAGEDDON '81, Nov. 6-8** — To be held at the University of Houston Central Campus. Events will include competitions in the AD&D game, *Squad Leader*, *Samurai*, *Air Force/Dauntless* and other games. Admission is \$5, plus \$1 for entry in the AD&D tournament. More information is available from Richard D. McLeod, Chairperson, Armageddon '81, Program Council, University of Houston Central Campus, University Center N-23, Houston TX 77004, phone (713) 749-1435.

**CONTRADICTION, Nov. 20-22** — A science-fiction convention to be held at the Buffalo Marriott Inn, Amherst, N.Y. Registration fee is \$8 until Oct. 31. For more information, contact Linda Michaels, 27 Argosy St., Amherst NY 14226.

**DETROIT GAMEFEST, Nov. 20-22** — This is the annual event sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers which was formerly known as WinterCon. It will be held in Cobo Hall in Detroit for the first time. More information can be obtained by writing to Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.



# To err is human, to repair divine

by Lewis Pulsipher

Almost any inexperienced DM sooner or later makes a big mistake. He lets a player character acquire a magic item or gain an ability which is simply too powerful, which enables that character to dominate the game so that other characters become onlookers instead of participants. A newly devised character class could result in a similar situation.

Everybody makes mistakes. But when it comes to fixing them, many inexperienced DMs have trouble finding the right approach. How can a mistake like this be rectified?

The first possibility is to ignore the problem and hope it will go away. But usually by the time the DM realizes his error, it will be evident that the problem isn't going to fix itself.

Second (the alternative that inexperienced DMs usually choose), the DM can start a vendetta against the character, throwing obstacles in the character's path until he kills him or steals his magic. I've often heard of this happening. I wonder how any character can survive for long against a determined DM, but apparently some do. Michael Stackpole's article "The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall" (*Sorcerer's Apprentice* #8) describes how to eliminate an overpowered character — if it is simply your intention to deliberately slaughter the victim. Let's assume, however, that the DM already knows how to kill someone, or how to neutralize his magic, in a short time.

This "vendetta method" is cruel treatment for characters when the means of revenge has no meaning in the context of the game. It is easy to concoct a pursuit or a conflict which arises naturally from the game, and not directly from the DM's realization of error.

For example, if a character obtains a powerful item, the former owner may try to get it back. He could hire magic-users or others to find out who has it, if he doesn't already know; he can contract an

assassin, or hire a magic-user to send an invisible stalker, or make a pact with a demon, or even use a *Wish* to regain his item. These are all natural parts of a fantasy world, and are not vendettas. It's the DM who manufactures a vendetta when no need for one exists who is using alternative two.

Any outright attempt at retribution or revenge, even of a non-vendetta nature, should be a last resort, not a first reaction. Such action can make the involved player, or all the players, feel that the DM is unfair. The DM could find his friendships with the player(s), outside the game, suffering severely. It can lead to feuds at times when another person serves as DM for the group, and the ex-DM's characters can be ganged up on. It can even lead to a vendetta just like the one that started the whole dispute.

There are two better methods of fixing a DMing mistake. The first one is to try to reason with the player involved. Show him how the ability or item he gained is harming the campaign, however much fun he may have lording it over everyone and showing off. Convince him that the game will be more fun for all, even himself, if he voluntarily gives up the cause of the disruption, possibly accepting some material compensation. Perhaps he'll give his magic item to the church in return for future favors, or to the state in return for a noble title. He might accept some non-reusable items for one indefinitely usable item. The trade can be arranged in such a way as to reflect well on the character and offer him possibilities of gain, even in a campaign where all other player characters have also become more powerful.

The other method is to persuade the player to retire his character either temporarily, until the other characters reach a similar level of power, or permanently, if the imbalance is really great. The player can enjoy the ego boost of possessing a powerful and well-known character, yet he will henceforth use another character on adventures. The imbalancing

factor will be out of the game, though it will still be in the background of the campaign.

By either of these solutions, the DM can avoid incurring the enmity of the player and avoid unfairly picking on one person, but still eliminate the disruption from the game. It is always better to resort to reason than to force; if all else fails, because of a player's refusals of less extreme solutions, a DM can still resort to the vendetta, if he thinks it's fair. Nothing is lost by trying other methods first.

Example: Let's say a character has been allowed to find a fully charged *lightning bolt wand*. Thereafter he starts blasting every enemy in sight while other characters look on and the DM grits his teeth. If he is a 10th-level character in a high-powered game, the wand won't disrupt the game much, but if he and his friends are fifth level something has to be done. Those 100 charges could last a long time. Perhaps you could offer (via a non-player character, with the gods mediating) to trade a special *ring of regeneration* which would work only for the character (fusing onto his finger) in exchange for the wand. Or you might offer a *Wish* (plus some interesting scrolls?). Think of some item or items which, while valuable to the player, will not disrupt the campaign the way the wand would. In general, the offered exchange should be defensive rather than offensive magic, or perhaps information-gathering magic instead of either of the other types, because offensive magic tends to help everyone in a character's party while the other types, if carefully selected, will help only the character to whom they are traded.

The DM who makes up for his mistakes in a manner such as this, given a proper and reasonable amount of agreement and cooperation by players, stands a far smaller chance of being looked upon as unfair or arbitrary — and his campaign stands a far greater chance of surviving.



# The best DMs will look further than the book

by Tom Armstrong

The attitudes of different Dungeon Masters towards the use of the available books of rules for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game are myriad. I have played in many campaigns at various times and have heard and seen all kinds of rulings.

One DM of my acquaintance permitted his players to read any and all of the manuals during play. This naturally led to the players looking up the various monsters as they encountered them. At the other extreme, I had one DM ask me not to look at the Players Handbook during his game. (Since I prefer to play magic-users, this definitely put a crimp in my style!) I've also seen just about everything in between.

In my own campaign, the players are permitted only the Players Handbook, while I alone use the Monster Manual and the Dungeon Masters Guide. This makes the game fairer in the sense that, if the players are able to look up the monsters, there is no challenge to dig for knowledge, or to try different things until the proper method is discovered. By the same token, permitting them to read the DMG means that they become totally self-sufficient, needing no outside help, and therefore producing no interaction with the non-player characters in the various towns and cities.

When the DMG came out, all the DMs I know were overjoyed! (I bought one of the first copies available in Colorado Springs.) The final answer to most of our problems had arrived! Imagine my complete happiness to find, not only those answers, but also new magical items — even a couple of monsters that my group was not familiar with!

Unfortunately, some of the players also bought the DMG, reviving the same problem I had before. Something had to be done! It had gotten to the point where, no matter what they encountered, they had all the answers. All the magical items were totally familiar to them — even though I had never included some of them in my treasures.

Well, I decided to change a few items here and there. I do this on occasion anyhow, and, if things were going to improve, it was darn near mandatory now! Any DM worth the name can't help but alter things just a little. It's a trademark of his/her game to have certain things that are different than all the others.

Monsters, of course, are an obvious place to twist things a bit. My players have stumbled across such things as kobolds with 18/00 strength, a rock troll (made of real rock), and lawful good goblins — all designed to shake up the average player's complacency. A few of my players were definitely upset after that single kobold wreaked all sorts of havoc by tearing into the group with a two-handed sword. And all of the players were a lot more cautious and a lot less sure of themselves — as it should be! — for a while afterward.

As for magical items, all is possible to he who thinks. The sky is the virtual limit! Most players ask for a description of the item first and go from there: "Sounds like a phylactery to me, Fred, let's see... there's one of Faithfulness, one of Long Years, and one for Monster Attraction." They then proceed to test the available choices and continue on to destroy more monsters and gain more treasure.

This time I threw a *Phylactery of Fumbling* at them, which they eventually decided was supposed to give the cleric a long life, and the next monster they ran into was a vampire. The faithful cleric dove into the fray with his trusty Mace of Disruption — and promptly dropped it! Before he could pick it up, the vampire hit him twice for a loss of 4 levels. Such fun!

The books themselves are not necessarily the final word on every question. There are statements in all of them to the effect that they are meant as guides only. To quote from the Afterword to the DMG:

*"It is the spirit of the game, not the letter of the rules, which is important. Never hold to the letter written, nor allow some barracks room lawyer to force quotations from the rule book upon you,*

*if it goes against the obvious intent of the game.... You are creator and final arbiter. By ordering things as they should be, the game as a whole first, your campaign next, and your participants thereafter, you will be playing ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS as it was meant to be."*

That statement says it all. To me, it is the most important statement in the entire DMG. If you are going to stick blindly to the books, use the charts in them exclusively, and never create something of your own, you may as well play a board game such as *Monopoly* or *Scrabble*. Their rules are written out, are not too complicated, and are basically inflexible. An AD&D™ game is not inflexible and was not meant to be. The books, even though they define a complicated structure of rules (which in many particular cases must be adhered to strictly), are in general very open-ended. Much of the text of the rules is taken up with general guidelines and lists of possibilities, leaving a multitude of options up to the DM.

Players might be upset after experiencing an unorthodox encounter. In the long run, however, they will come to realize that the game is more fun this way. They will not become so easily bored, and will tend to pay more attention to what is happening around them.

Your game must be challenging at all times. If it is not, players will become bored and may go looking elsewhere; your campaign will die a slow (or perhaps not so slow) death. It should be a personal Source of pride that your campaign is exciting, unique, and consistent yet always changing.

This does *not* mean that you should immediately drop everything and start changing your game so that it is unrecognizable as an AD&D campaign. Think carefully about anything you decide to change. Will it make the game unnecessarily complicated? Will it unbalance the game? These, and many others, are questions that you must take into consideration before altering anything.

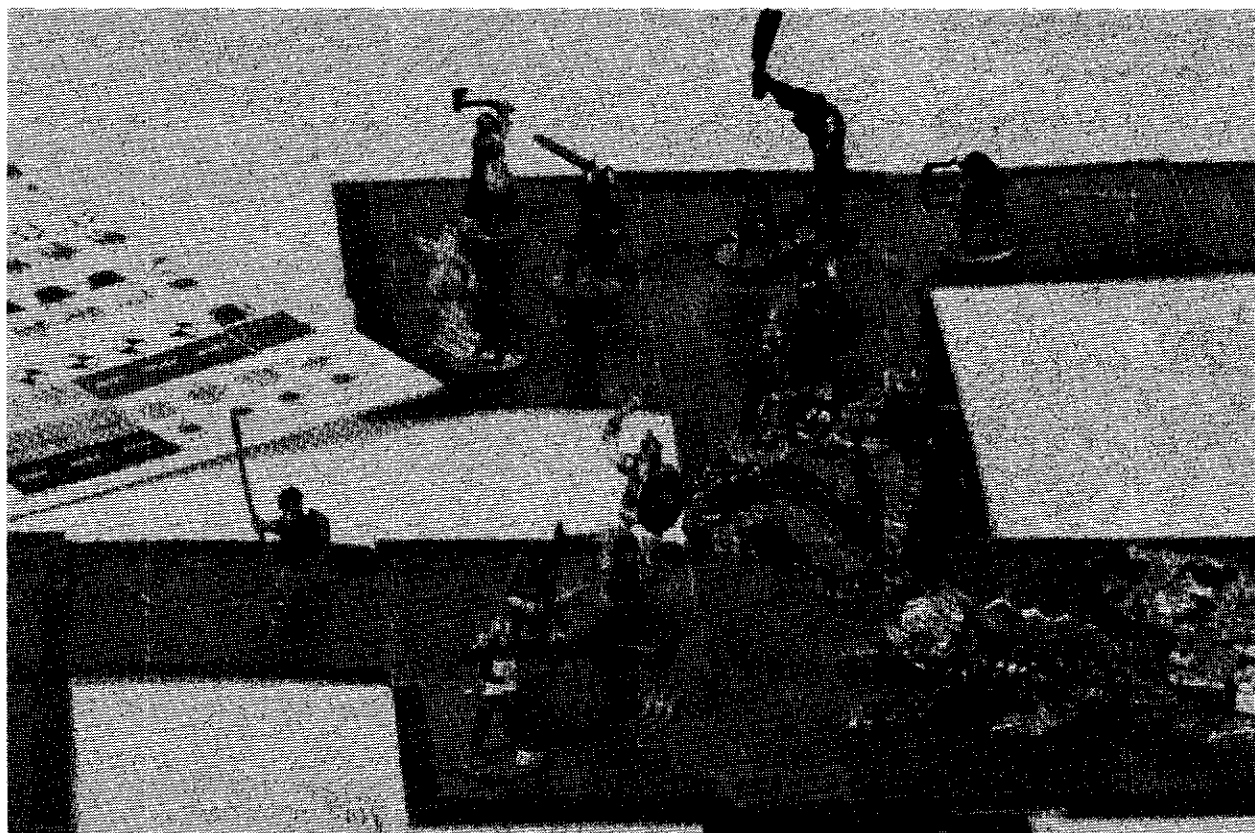
On the other hand, if you feel that your game has gone too "far to be revived, there's nothing to stop you from scrapping it in favor of an entirely new campaign. I myself have had to junk two campaigns and start over. When you are a brand-new DM (particularly, although veterans do it, too) you often tend to turn the game into a giveaway. Such was my problem, and the situation had to be rectified by scrapping the campaign.

The players should not read the DMG or the Monster Manual. But if they do, all is not lost for the DM who wants to keep some of the secrets of his world to himself. There are many things you can do to rectify the situation, and improve your game at the same time.

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# The evolution of the Shucassamites

by Glenn Rahman

Despite the great physical destructiveness of the Cataclysm, civilization was not totally extinguished on the South Plains of Minaria. Certain towns located near a source of water—Adeese, Jipols, Khuzdul, Parros and Zefnar—survived. The fact that they had access to oases was critical, for desert-like conditions prevailed throughout the area after the catastrophe. Deprived of regular rainfall, as well as its outlet to the sea, the giant lake of Cephallen shrank and became the bitter Sea of Zett. A land previously celebrated for its bounty turned into a parched waste over which rolled vast dust clouds.

Khuzdul was the first city to start on the road to recovery. Out of the wasteland came the Immortal Lord—an unconquerable soldier and peerless leader of men. He laid claim to the city, and ruled wisely. Elsewhere, agrarian-based democracies predominated. Alas, as the population grew and the barbarians became more menacing, the need for better organization was felt. Finally, the democracies were supplanted by military leaders—kings—on the pattern set by the Immortal Lord of Khuzdul.

Each of the great city-states preserved its own history in chronicles beginning shortly after the Cataclysm. One of the most important sources for the early history of the South Plains is Maiko's *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, written in the sixth century, but utilizing earlier records which are no longer in existence.

Maiko states that the vast majority of inhabitants of the city-states were tillers

of aristocrat-owned land. A military feudalism suited the conditions of the time—a general shortage of food and other essentials, and the constant threat of barbarian attack. As time wore on, a semi-divine kingship came to be the norm. But after half a millenium this political-economic system was showing signs of wear.

As the monarchs succeeded in suppressing barbarian attacks and baronial strife, the ensuing peace allowed farmers, herders and craftsmen to work more effectively and create a surplus of goods. It was found that these commodities could be carried between cities and sold at a profit. The peddlers who carried the goods accrued great wealth, to the point where some could afford to live like noblemen.

Trade soon extended to the small oasis villages beyond the cities and then to the tribal peoples of the coasts and plains. Parros and Zefnar thrived when they converted the ships of their fishing fleets into merchandise haulers.

By the beginning of the seventh century, Zefnar was in commercial contact with the Mivorian town of Colist. Shipbuilders experimented with new designs, and soon many trim galleys were plying the coasts of the Sea of Drowning Men.

Meanwhile, the merchant class of Adeese had grown numerous enough and rich enough to demand a say in the ruling of their city. The king replied with repression, until a revolt expelled both him and his aristocratic supporters. Events were much the same in Parros, Zefnar and Khuzdul.

Only conservative Jipols continued to

maintain a type of monarchy. Life was never so secure on the Barbarian Frontier as it was farther north. Accordingly, the king kept his throne in Jipols, in exchange for a charter guaranteeing political rights to the newly powerful merchant class.

The city-states of the South Plains prospered under merchant rule. Says the historian Shakaid of Zefnar: "The great gods placed their blessing upon the South Plains; peace and bounty was the portion of all men everywhere, rich and poor alike." Art and literature knew a renaissance under the plutocrats, while the political sway of the cities spread widely. Drawing soldiers from among the huge ranks of their agrarian yeomen, the cities seized great tracts of land. Adeese, the mightiest of the city-states, held sway from the Spires to the Sun to the Altars of Greystaff. Then, not content with this dominion, the city attacked ancient Pon and annexed its tin-rich mountains.

Despite outward appearances, the city-states were already past their peak of health by this time in history. As the generations passed, the yeomen freeholders lost their lands, which the plutocrats turned into vineyards or livestock pastures. As the countryside emptied of people and the cities burgeoned with unwarlike clerks, merchants, scholars, craftsmen and dispossessed paupers, the state militias could not meet their recruitment quotas. By 766, Adeese was forced to hire outside mercenaries when it went to war with Khuzdul over mining rights in the tin-rich Dry Mountains. Later, when Zehr-hu-Pon was invaded, the Black Knight's army was more than half composed of mercenary soldiers.

The danger of collapse of the civilization was slow to become apparent. Men admired the great aqueduct that was built from the Wanderer to the fields of Adeese—but, ominously, the well watered fields were worked only by slave gangs. Slavery increased in the cities themselves; hosts of slaves mass-produced goods at a cost that could undersell the goods of free craftsmen. The craftsmen subsequently joined the descendants of the yeomen in pauperage. In Zefnar, the capital of the slave trade, bondsmen and bondmaids were taught music, scribing, poetry, dance and cuisine. The spread of such "specialized" slavery threw thousands of free artists out of work, the same way the craftsmen had gone. Prosperity, once general, was now the privilege of very few.

Where this malaise was leading became manifest at the end of the ninth century. Then the Wisnyos, conquerors from the Barbarian frontier, seized Parros, Jipols and Zefnar and threatened even mighty Khuzdul. Wisnyo rule brought back the worst abuses of the

Age of Kings. Repression and taxation by the rulers and their representatives ground down the merchant class while doing nothing to stem the widespread poverty and unemployment.

Fortunately, the Wisnyo mis-rule was brief. The Wisnyo warriors took to quarreling and surrounded themselves with enfeebling luxury. Their second generation was a lazy, drunken and vice-ridden lot. When the terror of the "abominations of the land and the horrors of the air" threatened Zefnar ever so slightly, the reigning Wisnyo king, Kanin, lost heart and fled toward Parros. He was slain by his guards on the road, for the treasures he carried. After Kanin's death, Wisnyo rule collapsed and the city-states established a variety of weak, civilian governments.

Adeese also declined over the latter tenth century. Its southern frontier crumbled, and it was unable to keep up with the increasing cost of maintaining its mercenary army. Squadrons left their posts and marched on Adeese, demanding back pay. Unfortunately, one mercenary leader, Esheq of the Guinni tribe, turned the demonstration into a coup and set up a strongman rule. During the disorders that followed the usurpation, the great aqueduct was destroyed and the last vestiges of Adeesi control in Pon were lost.

Taking a lesson from Esheq, the mercenaries in the cities of the former Wisnyo Empire rose up and ended civilian rule. Eventually, even the oligarchy of Khuzdul fell — ordered to disband by Pollo, a mercenary captain from Beolon.

For more than two hundred years the city-states remained in the grip of various tyrants, who often had violent and short careers. Though they were certainly devious, ambitious and unscrupulous, many of the tyrants were also intelligent and cultivated men. Occasionally they helped their cities prosper, reviving arts and letters by their patronage. The Age of Tyrants was characterized by warfare between the city-states, in which military adventurers sought to establish empire and dynasty. The Black Knight of Stubstaff Keep has left us a vivid picture of these times in his memoirs — especially his *The War of the Three Tyrants*.

Continual warfare and political instability sapped the city-states of their potential during the period of tyrannic rule. Gyharan refugees from beyond the Barbarian frontier conquered Jipols in the early twelfth century, while the pirates of the Westward Islands humiliated the tyrants of Zefnar and Parros.

Meanwhile, in the savannas of the far south, a different kind of turmoil was disturbing the cattle and horse-breeding tribes that dwelt there. Even in the best of times, their lives tended to be turbulent. Warfare, plague, and famine sometimes

drove the excess population of the savannas out of their homeland — as when the migrating Yanna tribe invaded and overwhelmed the Gyhara Confederacy, founding the hybrid state of Yanna-gyghara.

In the early thirteenth century it was the turn of the Shucassami people to leave the trouble-beset savannas and take their herds and families north.

The Shucassamis were intelligent and warlike — as a cattle-raising people must be, to safeguard their herds against raiders. The generation that left the savannas was illiterate, but they have left songs and stories — collected by scholars such as Bakufar of Hio — that allow us to reconstruct their past.

To the Shucassamis, trade was regarded as less honorable than armed robbery, and was resorted to only when violence failed. Their dominant interests were war and the acquisition of cattle and horses. Their young men were skilled in many weapons — spears, swords, axes and the bow. The wealthy families were the aristocrats, but bards, smiths and women had good social positions.

The most generous family head attracted the most relations and, hence, the most manpower and status. Parsimony was the most despised vice with which a Shucassami noble could be charged. Kinsmen who attached themselves to the chief comprised his bodyguard in battle and, if he were slain, they were duty bound to die with him.

The Shucassami attitude to the supernatural was not sophisticated. Priests were supported in noble households, but their social standing was low. Worship centered on a vague concept of "Sky-borne Ones." It was believed that Fate was superior to both man and gods. This idea made the Shucassami hero resigned to ill fortune, while justifying him in his belief that he might win through against any obstacle, even against the hostility of the gods themselves. Such men — willing to take any risk — made fearsome foes. Other Minarians, with their elaborate rituals and pantheons, could find little of substance in the Shucassami faith and called the invaders "the people without gods."

This describes the people who burst upon the South Plains. The city chronicles have preserved the military aspect of the invasion, and the legends of the Shucassami recount the marvels they witnessed in the new land.

The clan of Ombos, for example, sent scouts ahead to locate water for the crossing of the Withering. The riders explored the arid landscapes until a beautiful piping music wafted to their ears. In hopes of finding a village or a foreign herder to rob, they followed the sound until they arrived at a small oasis. It was deserted, but the men were pleased to

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have found the water their people needed. As the sun was setting, the warriors ate their supper, reveled in their good fortune for a while, and lay down to sleep beside the pool.

Alas, only one of their number would ever wake again — and he would be a madman ever afterwards. Dhonn, the madman, told a tale of strange music that filled his dreaming mind. The warble seemed to lift his spirit from his body and guide him up into the starlit ether. As he opened his sleeping eyes, he saw his comrades similarly adrift in space. While he floated on, as if moved by a breeze, something else came into view of Dhonn's astonished eyes — a vast, formless mass with many tentacles of flowing mist. Around the mass danced and piped a myriad of hideous jinn, grasping the soul-bodies of the Shucassami as they drifted close and hurling them into the chaotic abomination. Dhonn screamed in horror and thrashed like one fighting his way out of a nightmare. Suddenly he found himself back on the sands of the oasis. He threw himself on his brethren and tried to rouse them, but they were dead to a man. Dhonn remembers nothing more that happened until other scouts found him wandering alone in the desert.

According to another legend, a warband of Shucassamis attacked a monastery on the edge of Blasted Heath. The barbarians rounded up the brothers and looted the temple of the god Naashu-Pinboh. The monks invoked their deity for deliverance and, lo, the raiders were stricken with leprosy. Griefstricken but acknowledging the power of Naashu-Pinboh, the Shucassamis remained at the monastery and joined the holy order. The god rewarded their conversion by making them the most feared of all men. When the raiders went to war in later years in the name of their Shucassamite sovereign, they found few enemies willing to stand their ground before the dreaded Lepers.

There are many such stories of peril and disaster which befell the Shucassami invaders, but the conquest of the South Plains progressed steadily nonetheless. The horsemen spread their influence widely, taking Jipols by a ruse and letting the inhabitants live to add their civilized skills to the victors' uncouth bravery. Raiders even ranged as far north as Muetar, until Emperor Egalon repulsed their bold forays.

Proerno, the duke of Heap in the Hills, chose this troubled time to attack Adeese, then being ruled by the tyrant Yoritom. The ruthless Yoritom ordered that a large group of country people be gathered together and driven to the Altars of Greystaff. Their sacrifice brought a firestorm down upon the army of Proerno, defeating the warriors. The duke

himself fled toward Pon, but Shucassami raiders chanced upon him and butchered him in an obscure part of the wasteland.

Two years later, when Shucassamis surrounded the city, Adeese fared less well. The tribesmen controlled the entire countryside, cutting off all relief and supplies. After a few months of isolation, starvation broke the will of the mercenaries in the city. Beniyan, the ataman (chief) of the Shucassamis, traded the sellswords their lives for the surrender of Adeese. The year was 1252, the official founding date of the Shucassamite kingdom.

From captured Adeesi engineers, the Shucassamis learned more about the art of siege warfare and applied the new tactics to Khuzdul. After a long investment trying to withstand the siege, the tyrant of Khuzdul, Shiror, committed suicide and the city fell.

After taking over Khuzdul, Beniyan consolidated his power for more than a decade, then turned his military machine against the port cities of Zefnar and Parros. These cities entered into an alliance with Queen Daring of Rombune, and the ensuing struggle was long and hard. Finally the queen accepted a political settlement, giving Shucassam special privileges in Zefnar, while reserving Parros for Rombune. The "special privileges" soon became an outright annexation.

Within his lifetime, Beniyan had seen the Shucassamite state grow from a dream to its vast present-day borders. Beniyan, a desert chief's son born in a leather tent, lived his old age in splendor, entertained by dancing girls who had been the daughters of great tyrants. As a signal that his work was done, Beniyan expired in a peaceful sleep.

What Beniyan had accomplished had never been done before. For the first time, all the city-states of the South Plains stood united. The union forged a commonwealth fit to defy even the power of resurgent Muetar and Mivior. Under the patronage of the royal scepter, Zefnar's decrepit fleet was rebuilt and did frequent battle for trading rights along the Minarian sea lanes.

The transition from nomad to urban aristocracy was not easily made by the Shucassami nobles. Native merchants revived trade on the South Plains, but the Shucassami took little direct part in it. Their noblemen could neither trade nor work the land without losing status. One might act as a patron of the arts and sciences, but was not supposed to dabble in either endeavor himself. About the only gainful pursuit left open to the noble was the breeding of horses and cattle. Despite his power and wealth, the Shucassami noble was poorly educated; his tutors were more interested in lessons of character-building than practical knowledge.

The poorer members of the conquering Shucassami disdained city life and either managed the herds of wealthy nobles or tended their own small flocks. Sons of nobility were often sent to work with their brethren in the country. There they learned horsemanship and were prepared for a later career of soldiery. The Shucassamite cattle-tender is known as the *gajoen* (herd-man). His type figures as a hero in many a Shucassamite song and story. To the present day, the gajoens form the hard core of every Shucassamite army. Without these daring, hard-riding men, the army—mainly conscripts from native stock—would be far less effective in battle and pursuit.

The cities of the South Plains have every reason to be grateful to their Shucassami conquerors. The decay of the Age of Tyrants has been reversed in a century of their rule. The learned disciplines have rallied and scientists, magicians and poets enjoy the bounty of both royal and noble courts. The cities glitter with new gardens, palaces and libraries. Their ancestors often suffered through invasions and the turmoil of war, but the present-day Shucassamite subjects benefit from the protection of one of the finest and most effective armies in Minaria.

The expense of rebuilding the civilization of the South Plains was immense, but the unification of this vast area makes it lucrative for Shucassam to control the trade routes running between Minaria and, the subcontinent of Girion. Caravans can avoid Shucassamite taxes only by expensive sea routes, or by the roundabout way through the lands of Pon.

Shucassam has fought sharp encounters with most of its neighbors, but the longest and most bitter conflict was waged against Pon. The Shucassamites hoped to close the trade routes which were enticing too many caravans away from their king's toll-stations, going instead through the heart of Pon. The invaders did considerable damage, but Archduke Phalor of Pon kept his defending troops in the mountains and rough country, where the Shucassamite cavalry was at a disadvantage. Finally, King Metchu could no longer justify his country's losses. The Shucassamite army withdrew and the stubborn mountaineers kept their trade routes.

The government of Shucassam is one of the youngest in Minaria. It is yet too soon to tell if the king in Adeese will be able to maintain the hard-won unity of the realm, or whether it will fall victim to the decadence that has undone earlier barbarian conquerors. The son of Metchu, Zanwee, begins his reign with the blessings of his diverse and far-flung subjects. Whether he can live up to the great tradition set by his ancestor, King Beniyan, only time will tell.

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# SIMULATION CORNER

by John Prados

## Practicing Game Design I: Choosing a topic

Probably the main reason people get into game design in the first place is that they get more and more into the games and at successively higher levels of generality. First the gamer creates his own character or he adds variant rules to his board game. Then he is soon creating his own scenarios. It is but a short leap from this point to creating your own role-playing or board game.

But just how do you go about making a game? This question has often been asked but seldom answered, and the lack of a widely available methodology for making a game is the major reason why most currently published game designers learned their trade through working for a publisher such as Avalon Hill or Simulations Publications, Inc.

*Simulation Corner* has made an effort to assemble a detailed but non-technical discussion of how to make a game. This is the first installment of a five-part series. The discussion in this mini-series "Practicing Game Design" is based on the experience of professional game designers. One major source has been interviews in the hobby press. A second is the author's experience, while the last is a series of detailed commentaries from three talented and widely respected designers. The latter are Jay Nelson, a freelance designer in New York; Stephen Newberg, founder of Simulations Canada; and Jack Greene, who has recently founded Quarterdeck Games out in California.

This first segment of the discussion will focus on choosing the topic for a game. In the early days, for me at least, this used to be easy. Avalon Hill produced maybe two games a year and they were always talked up months in advance. It was easy to do my own version of whatever was announced. But after branching out into serious design, one wants to conceive and produce a game completely independently of any existing product or idea. If the designer seriously intends to sell his game to a publisher, in fact, this is essential. The wide variety of game titles already on the market suggests that this exercise is harder than one would think; indeed, many designers complain that important

genres or historical periods are already "gamed out." The designer should not come in with a new version of an old topic unless there is something new and different in the vision he presents.

When they were consulted on how *they* choose the topic for a game, all of our expert panelists said the topic has to be something that interests them. Clearly a universal general conception, this can be defined as the first ground rule of selecting a topic. But to more sharply define "interest" it is necessary for the prospective designer to ask himself exactly what elements make for the interest he has in an idea. Is it something about the situation? The alternate-world realm? Or the period, or the type of conflict, or the nature of the contending forces? It is in this way that the designer accumulates an inventory of elements for expression in a game system. Moreover, specifying the elements which make a game idea of interest to the designer also provides the designer with a criterion for exclusion which serves him further along in the creative process to help prevent his game system from becoming overloaded by detail. While there is no necessary relationship between designer interest and quality of a game system, there is a definite correlation between designer disinterest and a poor game product, as many designers of early-period SPI "quad" format games would attest.

As a second ground rule, the designer should also identify what things he is *not* interested in. This further formalizes and amplifies the designer's criteria for exclusion. It may allow him to choose between topics in close-call cases where possible game subjects are related. In one example from an early SPI game, the designer of a Pacific island combat game chose among the different island battles he could have done on the basis of which islands had received reinforcements in the course of the battles in question.

The third ground rule is not to move too fast. It is good to pause after deciding that a topic is interesting, but before executing a full-fledged game-design project. This is necessary to allow design ideas to germinate, and it allows the

designer to consider whether he is truly committed to the project before he is in over his head in terms of spent time and loss of other opportunities. The most frequent cause of designer "burnout" on a game is rushing into the development of system mechanics that later turn out to be inappropriate or unwieldy during playtesting. The best method of prevention is a gestation period for the prospective designer to think about the range of elements he wants to include and the level of detail to be given to each sub-system.

The fourth ground rule is to identify in advance what scale and type of game *design* is required to achieve its creator's goals. Advance thinking about the elements to be included in the design and the size of the end-product game helps the designer to identify the crucial information he needs to create the system. Moreover, it is impossible for the designer to recognize what critical information is missing without knowing what items he needs to build the system.

How do you identify what scale and type of game is needed? How do you build an inventory of elements to be included in the system? Must you wait and not do *anything* on the exciting game idea that has popped up? Actually, you can indeed move right ahead, but the designer's moves should be purposeful and effective. The designer should use the gestation period to, as Jack Greene puts it, "read, read, and read."

Up at Simulations Canada, Stephen Newberg has contrived to use this reading time systematically. He reads a good deal, mainly history he says, and notes anything interesting he comes across. Periodically Stephen returns to these notes. From them he extracts possible game topics plus concrete information for individual game systems on which he is already working. As of early 1981, Stephen had some two dozen game topics on his list, aside from titles then in the design phase at Simulations Canada.

Jay Nelson notes that other published games may themselves stimulate his interest in a topic and lead him to read about it. He tries to "work through a whole variety of sources, first to get an



idea of the scope of the 'game' portion of the subject and then to more specific 'intra-game' material."

Research is necessary for any game design, and all three experts alluded to it in their comments on the first step taken in creating a game design. Even fantasy and science-fiction games, as opposed to historical ones, require research because there the goal is to create a game universe with wholly consistent elements. In historical games, of course, the need for research has always been acknowledged as a major component of game quality. Some games which are totally unplayable are nevertheless prized for the quantity and/or quality of their research content. Alternately, some highly playable games on historical subjects are not commonly or properly described as "simulation" games.

Unlike most other aspects of game design, there has been substantial written commentary on the process of research. Consult Stephen Patrick's contribution to the SPI staff study *Wargame Design*. For a more authoritative introduction to the general methodology of research, see Graff and Barzun's *The Modern Researcher*.

One other thing about game topics is worth saying. There is always room for a fresh vision, a new design in a bold direction. But the game must say something

and must be dynamic to achieve this.

The hobby is not as "gamed out" as some people may think, a fact which is demonstrated in part by my simulation game *Kanev: Parachutes Across the Dnepr* (People's War Games, 1981), which is an interesting concrete example of choosing a topic for a game. In this case I had been considering the general question of small-format games and thought there should be no reason why "mini" and "micro" games necessarily have to be uninteresting and repetitive. I also wanted to show that not all good historical situations have yet been done as games.

Choosing a topic is only the first step in creating a game. Many are the game ideas that never go beyond this stage. To push the idea beyond this point, the designer must bring to bear his skills in innovating game mechanics. *Simulation Corner* will turn to the whole question of building models for game systems in the next installment of this series.

#### FOR FURTHER READING:


Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff, *The Modern Researcher*. New York, 1972.

Strategy & Tactics Magazine Staff, *War-game Design*. S&T Staff Study No. 2, Simulations Publications, 1977.

ROBERT L. ASPRIN'S

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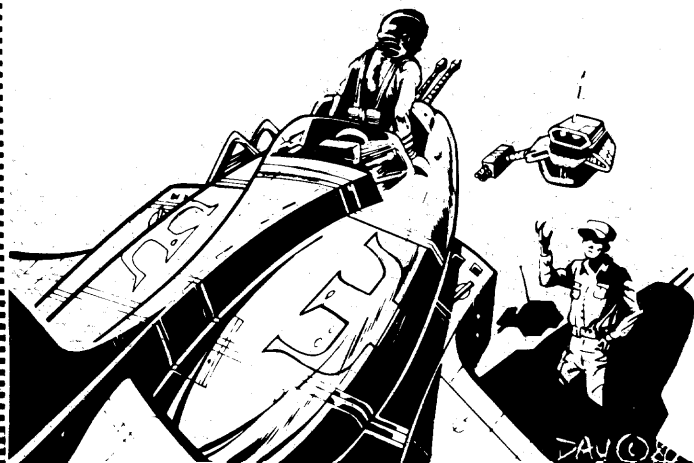


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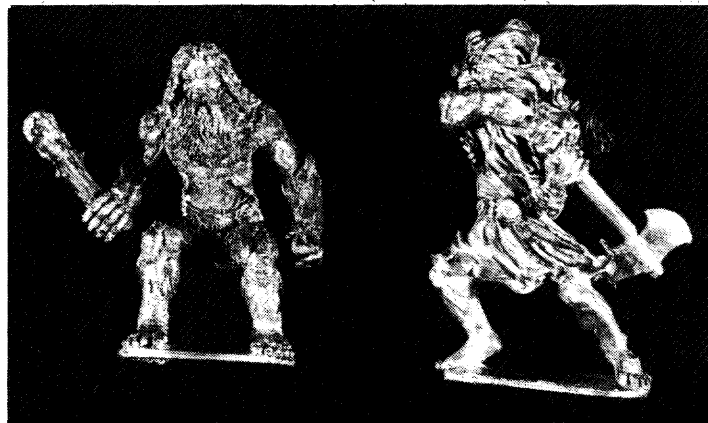
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# Figuratively Speaking

## RAL PARTHA

### 25mm giants



Two new giant sculptures, suitably scaled for use with 25mm figures, are offered by Ral Partha. The Hill Giant (left) is part of the "Children of the Night" series, and the Storm Giant (right) is in Ral Partha's "Personalities" line.

#### Hill Giant

Prop: 7 Det: 8  
Anim: 8 Tech: 7

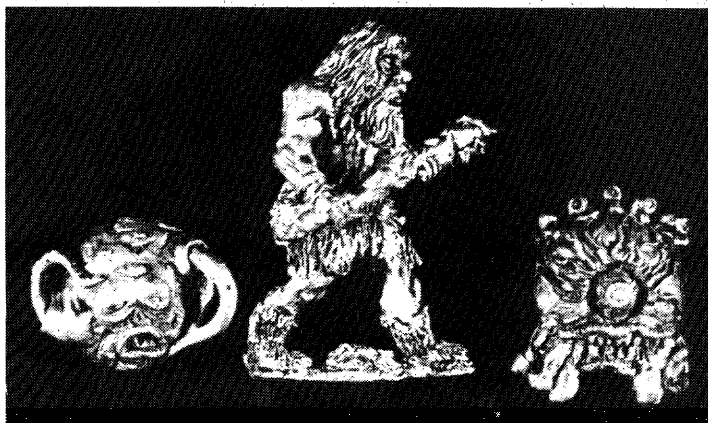
The high quality of the detail in the body hair and face make this a notable figure.

#### Storm Giant

Prop: 7 Det: 6  
Anim: 8 Tech: 7

This sculpture succeeds in giving the impression that the figure is leaning into a strong wind, mainly because of the flowing hair and beard and the animated posture.

## HERITAGE USA



#### Hill Giant

Prop: 6 Det: 7  
Anim: 7 Tech: 7

This rendition of a striding Hill Giant should paint up very nicely. It contains a good amount of detail, including subtleties such as bracelets and a necklace of teeth. This figure, like most Heritage offerings, is signed by the sculptor on the underside of the base.

#### Beholder

Prop: 6 Det: 7  
Anim: 8 Tech: 6

This is a truly evil-looking eye tyrant (at right in above photo), which comes packaged with an unidentifiable, but hungry-looking companion (at left). The beholder is solidly made and can be "stood up" on a base or other flat surface.

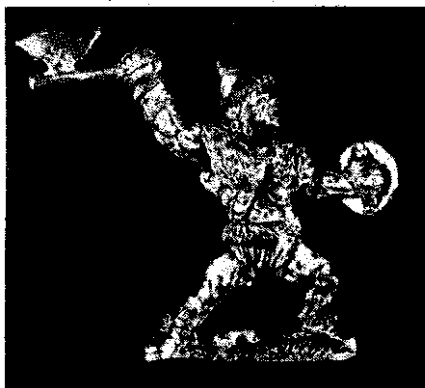
## CASTLE CREATIONS



#### Condor

Prop: 7 Det: 7  
Anim: 8 Tech: 6

This great bird, sculpted in a pose as though it is about to strike, has a wingspan of more than 6 inches. Each condor comes with a rider who is armed with either a sword or a lance. A smaller, but equally well done, hawk figure is also available from this company.



#### Skull Splitter Giant

Prop: 6 Det: 7  
Anim: 6 Tech: 7

This formidable figure would work well as a Fire Giant. The shield has an interesting face on its front, and the axe has been molded to taper toward the cutting edge.

## RAL PARTHA

### Fantasy Collector Series



#### Cold Drake

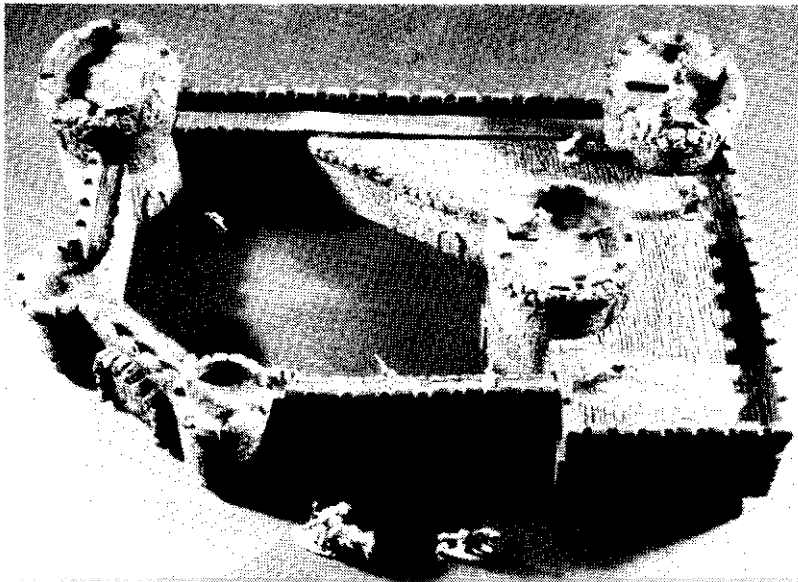
Prop: 6 Det: 7  
Anim: 8 Tech: 7

This reptilian-looking figure lacks front appendages, but is otherwise suitable for use as a small dragon or wyvern. The mouth area and scales are nicely done. The wings come as one separate piece and attach easily, leaving no sign of the junction with the body.

Reviews by  
Bill Fawcett

Photographs by  
Kathy O'Donnell

## PENN-HURST/GREENFIELD HOBBY DIST.

**CASTLEKEEPS — Module One**

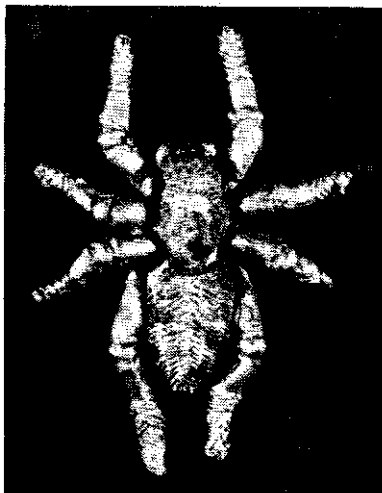
This plastic castle is beautifully molded and detailed. The ceiling of the covered area and the towers all lift off to allow for the movement of figures under and through those areas. The plastic is tough and will resist chipping while taking paint easily. The structure is scaled primarily for use with 15mm figures; only a few 25mm figures would fit in any of the towers, and the doors are definitely made to 15mm height. The price for this accessory is a hefty \$44.95, but the quality of the castle makes it worth checking into for anyone who does a lot of 15mm fantasy or medieval gaming. Several additions to the basic structure, including a tower and a keep, are now offered, and other modular add-ons will be forthcoming, according to the producers. (The figures shown at the bottom of the photograph are not included with the castle, but are included for size comparison. The left-hand figure is 25mm, the right-hand one 15mm.)

## CITADEL MINIATURES

**Ogre**

Prop: 6 Det: 6  
Anim: 7 Tech: 6

This fearsome figure, equipped with hammer and shield, boasts deeply etched features, including a skull-and-fang necklace and a sinewy, hairy body. The mouth is the most impressive single feature — a gaping hole with distinctly sculpted teeth and even a detailed tongue.

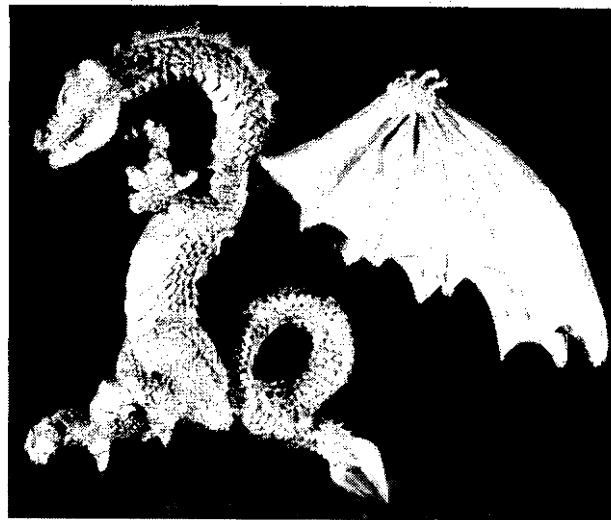
**Giant Spider**

Prop: 6 Det: 7  
Anim: 6 Tech: 6

This figure, when painted carefully, is realistic enough to give the jitters to the family arachnophobe. The legs are well positioned to give the impression of movement, and sturdy enough to stand up to handling without being out of scale.

## GRENADIER MODELS

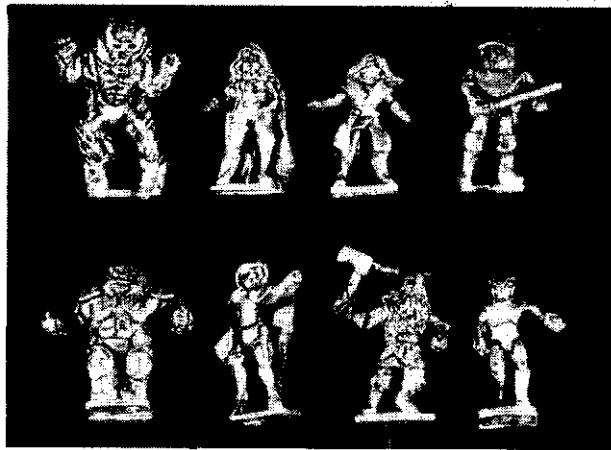
AD&amp;D™ series, The Dragon's Lair



Prop: 5 Det: 7  
Anim: 7 Tech: 7

This serpentine dragon, poised to strike, is the major element in Grenadier's newest set of figures in its official AD&D line. Also included in the package are a treasure assortment, two very small young dragons, and a set of eggs which are just hatching. The 6-inch-long dragon is nicely detailed and comes partially assembled.

## HERITAGE USA

**Supervillains and Superheroes**

Prop: 7 Det: 6-7  
Anim: 7-8 Tech: 6

These figures, for use with any superhero rules, come in a boxed set with a well written painting guide and a brief set of rules for gaming with them, in case the buyer doesn't already have a set of rules to use.

*We show 'em, they sell 'em*

Letters from readers concerning this feature are appreciated, but unfortunately *Figuratively Speaking* cannot provide more information for potential buyers of the figures which are reviewed, such as addresses of the manufacturers. Those who want to contact a figure manufacturer or dealer are encouraged to look through advertisements in this and other magazines. Your local hobby shop is also a good source for this sort of information.

# Basic Role-Playing made easy

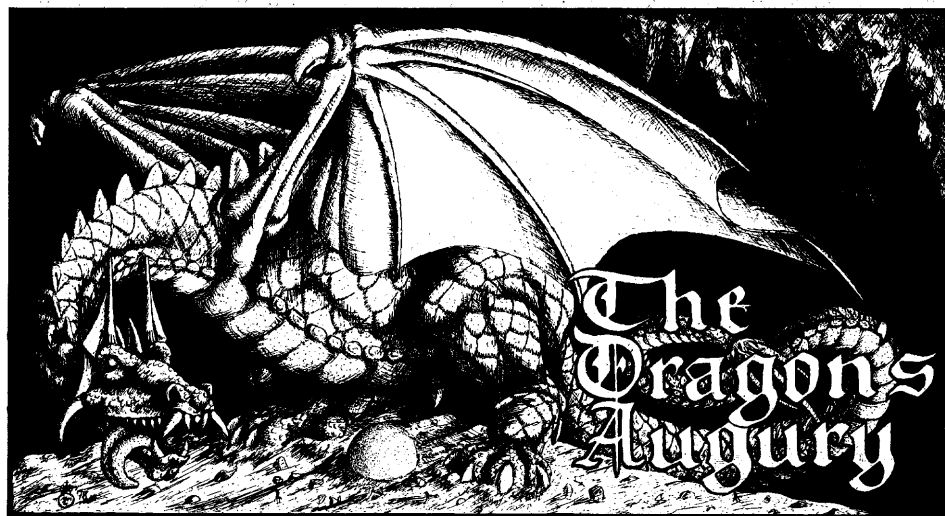
by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

This is the second edition and the first to be sold separately, as it originally appeared as one of the components of *Boxed RuneQuest*. The 8½" x 11" book consists of 16 pages of rules, tables, and character sheets; an insert on heavier paper with playing pieces for characters and monsters plus chits to substitute for dice (most ¾" square, and which have to be cut up for use); and a battleboard of offset rows of ¾" squares. This gives you the functional equivalent of a hexgrid without its linear distortion, so when you place a sheet of clear plastic over it to draw in room walls, your square room will be *square* instead of a rhomboid (following hexsides) or a rectangle (using right-angle corners). I greatly prefer this kind of battleboard to a hexgrid.

The book suggests that you photocopy the character sheets, playing pieces, and battleboard rather than cutting them out, and points out that by copying the battleboard multiple times you can have modular boards for larger play areas. I find the ¾" squares on the board a bit constraining because I use 7/8" bases on my metal figures, but *BRP* may be worth buying simply to get the battleboard for gamers who find its size convenient. Perhaps Chaosium can be talked into publishing an alternating-square battleboard with 1" squares as a *RuneQuest* accessory?

*BRP* is designed as an introductory guide to the hobby of role-playing games of all kinds, and is therefore written more in terms of what the hobby is about than in terms of rules for all occasions. In fact, it is not a fantasy role-playing game as such, but a handbook on how to role-play and a simple combat system to help the beginner get into the act. There is no magic system at all in *BRP*, and so it is more comparable to *Melee* by Metagaming than any other product in concept (and in price).

Given these limitations, is *BRP* worth buying? Yes, it is. *BRP* is one of the best introductions to the practical social interactions in gaming that I have read, and will give beginning gamers the kind of guidance they typically do not get in the full-scale games they will graduate to, since game writers usually spend their time on mechanics instead of on the proper relationships between player and player, player and referee, or player and character. *BRP* is a beginner's course on how to think like a character and how to build the character's personality from what you begin with and from what develops with experience.



It is true that the rules used to start the reader off for introductory scenario play are simplified *RuneQuest* mechanics, but this is really unimportant — *BRP* may be the best accessory you could buy for \$4 for a beginner, even if you are playing with a different set of mechanics in your campaign.

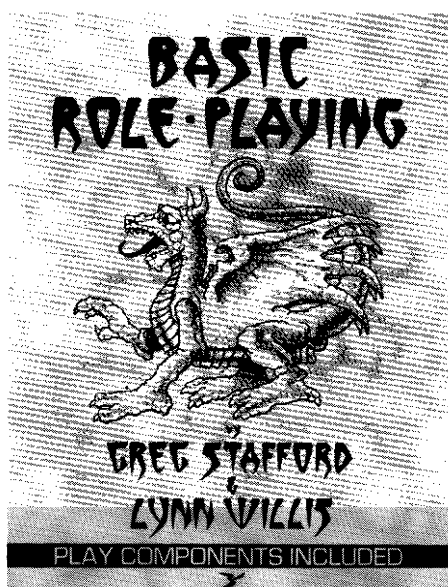
*BRP* is divided into an introduction to role-playing as a form of gaming, and a

life of your character in terms that you already understand. This is a highly superior teaching technique.

From the introduction to role-playing; *BRP* moves to introducing the reader to the materials used in gaming. Then the text discusses how you generate a character — not merely the numbers that make up the statistics, but how to put life into those statistics to produce a personality. This is defined in common terms that the reader can quickly comprehend.

Once the reader knows how to create a character, *BRP* goes on to introduce the player/character to the dangers and excitement encountered in life. The reader learns a basic combat system and is shown how it works with several sample engagements of different kinds. There are a few points I would have liked to see spelled out better, such as how you produce a d3 of damage, or why the shield is listed as having 12 "breakage points" and yet is described as not breaking when hit, but by and large the system writeup is clear enough to be mastered quickly. This section includes a sample solo scenario, a simple situation that illustrates (without making a fuss over it) the fact that gaming doesn't require a lot of advance preparation to be fun.

*BRP* closes with some good advice on where to go from there, including further reading, how to find players, the wide range of games to look into, and finally a quiet reference to Chaosium Inc., as a source of products to look into. When you consider that this could have been designed solely as a sales pitch throughout the book for Chaosium, and was not, I think this was done with a degree of taste and restraint not often seen in the business world. *BASIC ROLE-PLAYING* is a truly universal introduction to the hobby — highly recommended.



description of the mechanics used to illustrate how you get started doing it yourself. Both are written in parallel sections of explanatory text and sample gaming situations featuring a character faced with a series of decisions that illustrate what the text is talking about. The text is written in a simple, conversational style, and the sample gaming illustrations use everyday situations in the life of a common country person to make the quiet point that role-playing is living the



# TIMELAG leaves a gap

by Tony Watson

The entire aspect of Einsteinian relativity and the very real effect this would have on interstellar warfare is something that has largely been ignored in most SF games. For the most part, FTL (faster than light) drives are posited that neatly circumvent this problem. Without FTL engines, ships streaking along at appreciable fractions of light speed would experience a much slower passage of time than the time passage on their home world. A starship on an interstellar voyage might mark time by the year, while the planet it left from, and perhaps more important, the planet it was going to, counted by decades. The effect this would have, especially on the technological aspects of warfare, would be tremendous.

*TIMELAG*, by Gameshop (now known as Nova Game Designs), strives to deal with just this phenomena.

*Timelag's* approach is to keep track of the age of the starships in the game on a graduated scale. Each game turn represents five years and a counter corresponding to each ship encounter is moved along this "out of tech" track every turn this ship moves (not moving allows a ship to lose five years of aging, reflecting some technology "catch-up"). Relative age of combatant starships is an important factor in figuring combat strengths.

The game is a strategic simulation pitting a presumably Terran society against an alien race, on a 10" x 14" map depicting seventeen solar systems. The units involved are starships, rated for combat value and tech level. The players vie to control the star systems for the economic points they garner for their owner. These points are determined randomly when the system is moved into; a die is rolled and the result multiplied by five. The owner gets these points every turn, and the output of particularly lucrative systems can be doubled by building a base in the system.

Star systems on *Timelag's* map are groups of four stars linked together by jump routes. Ships can move in a standard fashion; that is, between contiguous hexes, or can attempt to jump between stars of a system. In some cases, jumps can be made between stars of differing systems. The exact movement capabilities of a ship, the number of hexes and jumps it may move in a turn, is determined by its tech level.

Combat takes place between opposing ships in the same hex, with combat strength, tech level and age differential all figuring into the final result. Results range from one-for-one ship exchanges

to total loss for one side. There are also provisions for a couple of more flashy weapons, the warp and the sunburst, which are placed in systems and used to scatter or incinerate enemy ships.

*Timelag's* components aren't particularly fancy, which isn't surprising considering the low cost. They consist of a somewhat unappealing map, die-cut counters, "out of tech" sheets and a rules folder.

While I was intrigued with *Timelag's* premise, I was a bit disappointed in the game as a whole. The random method of determining economic values of systems can lead to a vast disparity between the

players. One or two fortuitous rolls by the opposition can spell doom for a player even before the fleets clash, especially if the doomed player's own luck at rolling economic values is below average in that game. The economic system also pumps a lot of EPs into the game quickly. It's not uncommon for a player to be able to purchase a higher tech level and most of the new ships at that level all in one turn, especially at the lower tech levels. The game system also tends to favor the player on the strategic defensive since his ships won't age as much (less movement) and subsequent battles will tend to his favor since his ships will likely be younger and of higher tech than the attacker's.

*Timelag* certainly portrays the effect



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of time dilation on space warfare; but other than that, it is not really that interesting. Other games such as *Warp War* and *Stellar Conquest* have taken into account the factor of technology differential, and in substantially more interesting ways. *Timelag* relies on a gimmick, and this device wears thin after a few play-

ings. Couple this with a tendency toward poor play balance and you have a game which, sad to say, possesses a minimum of long-lasting appeal.

*Timelag* was designed by Mike Vitale and is available for \$3.95 from Game-shop, 46 Dougherty Street; Manchester, Connecticut 08040.

## DUNGEON TILES can take the guesswork out of game-playing

by Tony Watson

The action in dungeon encounters often gets fast and furious, with fighters stepping forward to wield their blades and axes, half-lings and the like maneuvering to get a shot off, and the magic-users stepping back to conjure up a couple of spells. Often the situation can be even more complex than this, as in instances where the party is surprised while looting a room or just resting up and tending to their wounded. Circumstances where the group is ambushed from more than one direction or where furniture and other cover is being used can be trying for the Dungeon Master, since he must deal both with the resolution of combat and the ever-changing positions and locations of the participants.

A new gaming aid might prove helpful in conducting dungeon melees. It is *DUNGEON TILES* by Task Force games, and represents

that company's first foray into the fantasy role-playing game market. It should be emphasized that this is a game aid, and despite the nice-looking box cover, is not usable as a stand-alone game.

*Dungeon Tiles* is a set of components for laying out the corridors and rooms of the underworld on a tabletop, complete with informational indicators and furniture. Combined with 25mm figures (*not* supplied), the set allows both the players and the DM to better visualize the turns and twists of the dungeon, and aids in setting up and conducting battles and encounters.

The set consists of eight full-color sheets of punchout tiles. These tiles represent lengths of dungeon corridors, stairways and rooms. They are very nicely executed with brown stone motifs, replete with scattered bones

and broken weapons. Dark borders are used to represent the dungeon's interior walls. Most of the tiles are 2½" square, though some are a bit larger, as this conforms to 25mm scale.

Also included are 108 die-cut counters that serve a variety of functions. Some represent objects such as doors, traps, grates, chests, sacks of coins, fountains, rubble and trash, and various items of furniture. Others serve as indicators of the area's condition: slime, dampness, smoke, fire, darkness, footprints, blood trails and the like.

A four-page folder comes with the set, explaining how to use the tiles to maximum effect, including discussions of sighting and "stacking" (the number of figures per tile). Attention is paid to movement, combat formation and special combat situations, such as fighting through doorways. An example of the use of tiles in an adventure is included as well.

*Dungeon Tiles* should be useful to those groups who desire more precision in the conduct of their encounters, or to the DM who feels the need for a little help in presenting the situation to his players. While the set is fairly complete, players will notice that some things are lacking — curved wall and corridor sections, for example. Task Force has stated that if this initial set is well received, supplementary sets will be forthcoming.

*Dungeon Tiles* is published by Task Force Games and sells for \$10. Task Force does not selling by mail, so buyers will have to find the set in their local hobby stores.

## There's more!

Proud as we are of this issue of *DRAGON™* magazine, we're pretty pleased with what we've done in the past. And apparently, so are our readers, because most of our back issues are sold out. We do have copies of some magazines for sale, including issue #22 and issues #40 through #51.

If you've searched in vain for a copy of one of our early issues, the *BEST OF THE DRAGON™* may solve the problem. This anthology of reprints of our most requested material from issues #1 through #14, is one of several other products sold by Dragon Publishing: *THE FINIEOUS TREASURY™*, a collection of adventures featuring the hero of our most popular comic strip; and *DRAGON-TALES™*, an anthology of original heroic fantasy fiction and art.

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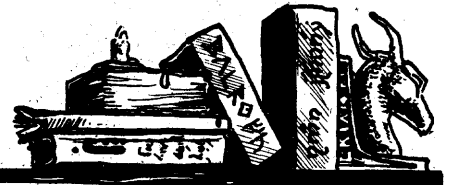
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# Off the Shelf



Reviewed by Chris Henderson

## DREAM PARK

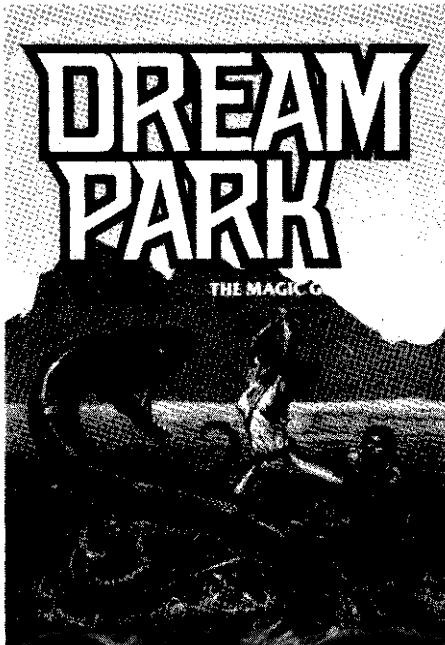
Larry Niven & Steven Barnes

Ace Books 16726-8

\$6.95

The world of *Dream Park* is a role-playing enthusiast's dream come true. After the massive earthquake which ruined southern California, the Cowles Industry Corp. went in and created the ultimate adult playland. In it, tourists could wander about, seeing actors and holograms do magic, wage battles, and die, simply for their amusement. They could go on rides unlike those in any other park (such as the gravity whip), or they could enter "The Games."

The gaming layout is simple. A Game Master first sets up a scenario; it can be the finding



of sunken treasure, saving a kidnapped princess from headhunters, waging interstellar war, what have you. The game is laid out in typical fashion. If those playing the game can find and follow the right clues (with the help of their Loremaster), and make it through the entire game without "dying," then they split the points accumulated by their team, and the profits from such things as the movie made from the game and the sale of book rights.

The game going on during *Dream Park* is a meeting of the greats. Richard and Mitsuko Lopez are considered the most brilliant Game Masters in the field. This is their chance to prove that they can design an unbeatable challenge. Their opponent is Loremaster Chester Henderson. This is his chance to avenge his embarrassing defeat in Lopez's last game. That game brought charges of cheating and unfair conduct from Henderson against Lopez.

Henderson picks his men and women, and the players move onto Lopez's board. Play begins, and the game areas are transformed into the South Seas through Dream Park's hologram and weather control center.

In the meantime, while the game is played out in the parkland, below in the park's R&D labs a man is murdered and the park's newest secret is stolen. All evidence quickly indicates that one of the game players is responsible.

The situation becomes very awkward; if the game is stopped and all the players detained, Californian politics and outside business pressures could ruin the park. If the sample and formula of Neutral Scent (a chemical which would enable the park to make the games much more realistic) is not recovered, Dream Park will lose a great potential advantage over its rival parks.

Thus, the only compromise seems to be to send a Dream Park security person into the game, in hopes that he can identify the murderer and recover the park's stolen property. Security chief Alex Griffin is sent in. Griffin's problem is to carry out his mission without either disrupting or becoming too involved with the game. He finds neither task easy.

*Dream Park* is a fascinating study of the role-playing mentality. In the book, one sees all of the familiar types, from the puffy-faced novice who doesn't know what to put on his mule, to the tough, sharp-minded player who always seems at least two moves ahead of the competition.

The novel shows both men and women playing, and shows what they get out of it. The pace of the novel never slows, as the imaginative Lopez duo throws obstacle after obstacle in the players' way, while Griffin tries to find his quarry.

*Dream Park* is much better than some of Niven's other recent efforts (such as *The Patchwork Girl*). One of the more interesting aspects of the novel is that a reader tends to find oneself much more interested in how the game will turn out, rather than whether the murderer/thief/spy will be caught. It only goes to prove that truth *may* be stranger than fiction, but fiction is usually more interesting.

## DRAGONSLAYER

Wayland Drew

Dei Rey Books

345-29694-X

\$2.75

*Dragonslayer* is fairly traditional swords & sorcery on the surface. The place is England; it is the time of conflict between the early Christians and the Druids. To this area and time comes the dragon Vermithrax. Choosing a cave outside the post-Roman village of Swanscombe, the creature settles in to enjoy the pickings. A number of warriors attempt to rid the land of the beast, but all of them fail.

Over the years, a lottery is devised. All of the available virgins' names are put into a pot twice a year, and the unlucky winners are

sacrificed to the dragon. This diet appeases Vermithrax, and the dragon sticks to it, only coming out of its home to collect its meals.

Some of the residents of Swanscombe do not readily go along with the King's lottery, though, and wish to see the dragon destroyed. The risk is that if someone tries to kill Vermithrax and fails, the dragon will rampage as it has in the past. The conflict of the story thus is more between the peasants and the royalty than it is between humans and dragons.

The most likely dragonslayer in the area (apparently in the entire world, since he is the only wizard left alive) is the sorcerer Ulrich. After being approached by the peasants, he agrees to fight the beast. Before he can, however, he is slain by the king's men.

This leaves only Ulrich's apprentice, Galen, to face Vermithrax. The problem is that Galen is untried in magical combat and he is not all that good a magic-mover at all.

The stakes are raised for Galen after he falls in love with a young woman who is very likely to be the dragon's next offering. Fearful, clumsy, and unskilled, Galen attacks Vermithrax in its lair and wins — for a while.

The menace of the dragon puts Galen, his love, and all of England in danger, especially since the audience knows that Galen cannot defeat the creature himself.

*Dragonslayer* is a powerful book. Using the

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and Master Charge

traditions of epic fantasy as a starting point, Drew takes the Hal Barwood/Matthew Robbins screenplay (on which the novel is based) far past the usual hack-and-slash conventions, exploring the nature of the world he has created and the people which fill it.

Much of the novel differs from the simplistic and often predictable Paramount/Disney film released in June. Galen is a young man of intense character. He is sensible enough to know he cannot beat the dragon, brave enough to try, and young enough to be swept up in everyone's enthusiasm when they believe the monster is dead. He is willful, proud, intelligent and foolish. In Drew's creation, Galen leaves the foppish, one-sided character of the movie behind to become a much more believable person in the book. Drew does this with all of the novel's inhabitants, bringing them forward, examining them in a much fuller and more human manner than the film can manage.

This is not the author's greatest accomplishment, however. In *Dragonslayer*, Drew also examines the struggle between the early Christian church and the hanging-on druids. Both are portrayed as they most likely were: The Christians as mad zealots, sacrificing themselves to an uncaring god. Some people of the time view them as foolish, others see their antics as comical. Very few look upon them as martyrs for a great faith. Religion is reduced to comparison shopping rather than a matter of faith, which, in a time of worshipping a great number of gods, is as it should be.

Drew wraps his sub-plot of religious soul gathering neatly around the main storyline, never making it oppressive or monotonous.

*Dragonslayer* is good solid, can't-put-it-down reading. It shows early England as it really was, presenting a graphic picture so real one can see the drab, hand-stitched clothing and the mud-clogged streets without being told they are there. By adding the physical and emotional dimensions left out of the screenplay, Drew has taken a very standard outline and given it life, making it the best fantasy novel so far this year.

## SUNFALL

C.J. Cherryh

DAW Books 0-87997-618-7

\$2.25

Cherryh is best known for her science-fiction novels. Although they have almost all been filled with a harsh action style not used by most female writers, she has always tempered them with her extremely solid characterization, making each work more detailed and a little bit thicker than the one before it.

This time, to the surprise of most of her audience, she has come out with a slim (158 pages) volume of interconnected short stories, written in a mainly fantasy style. *Sunfall* is a collection of tales from the Earth's future. It is a time when the sun is dying, a giant red ball hanging in the sky, ticking off the years left to the third planet and its inhabitants. Each story takes place in a different city. How many cities are left, we do not know; Cherryh tells us of only six (London, Paris, Moscow, Rome, New York and Peking). They are never mentioned by name, and they never interact with any of the other remaining cities.

Each city is unique. Centuries earlier, when

each of the small empires had begun to evolve, different ways of life were chosen, all based on what their cultures were like at this time. New York continued to grow upward and outward, a large man-made mountain of a city. Paris dug underground, becoming level after level of dark, windowless, family-owned suites.

Some of the cities concerned themselves only with survival, battling the elements instead of their neighbors. Moscow has the snow to contend with. Peking has the nomadic prairie hordes to plague it. New York has its own unions to deal with, while London seems bent on destroying itself. Paris plays games, and Rome dreams.

All of the stories are good. They would each stand alone quite nicely, but there is an interdependency which makes them a fine experience when read straight in a row. Truthfully, the full impact of London's ghosts and Paris's structure of reincarnation are not fully apparent until the last story "The General" (Peking) is read.

Cherryh has beaten Bradbury at his own game. Where the supposed poet laureate of science-fiction has gotten away with meandering through his stories for years, defending his silly ideas and half-hearted storytelling with the beauty of his style, Cherryh has gone him one better. Taking his flowery style, she has crafted six strong, intelligent tales, all of them wonderful in their language and yet powerful in both plot and character.

By the end of the book, there is no earth-shaking conclusion; the sun is still red and swollen, and our planet and its cities are still dying. The final picture is one of rot and decay. Man has not gone shining and gleaming off to the stars. A prideful, insolent, lazy animal, man has become mired in his own inadequacy, destroying those individuals who would rise above it all.

*Sunfall* is not Cherryh's best (an author can only have one "best" and so far *Downbelow Station* is hers), but it is a fine collection nonetheless. More thoughtful than exciting, this grim tale of the future, while much more firmly rooted in fantasy than in science fiction, is one of the best "life-ahead-of-us" books produced in quite some time.

## HORSECLANS ODYSSEY

Robert Adams

Signet 451-E9744

\$2.75

There is little doubt that Robert Adams' Horseclan series is one of the best science-fiction/fantasy series ever conceived. Although often labeled as a science-fiction series, there is very little in the novels to justify such a characterization.

Set in our future, the Horseclan books tell of the reconstruction which takes place after the wars. Man is reduced to barbarism. Civilization is a hodgepodge of histories, with ancient artifacts popping up from time to time. The armor is from a number of periods, some warriors wearing full plate, some mail, some only boiled and waxed leather. Adams has constructed a world where he can make few mistakes. There can be no anachronisms, for all of history has gone before and is there to be rediscovered.

In previous volumes of the Horseclan series, Adams has consistently moved forward in time. With this volume (and the next few to follow it) he moves back before the time of his first novel, *The Coming of the Horseclans*. The first book was deliberately left open at both ends for this to be done later. Far from being confusing because of this "going backwards," *Horseclans Odyssey* is well contained between its covers, needing no previous reading to be understood. (It is in fact, a very good place for anyone who has not read any other Horseclans novels to start.)

The book deals with the kidnapping of, and search for, three Horseclan children. After they are tricked into sharing supper with slavers, the eldest brother is slain trying to escape, leaving his sister and two younger brothers in the slavers' hands. From this point on, author Adams takes the reader through a Burroughs-like twisting tale bounding back and forth between the following points: (A) Big sister escapes, only to fall into the hands of a sadistic hunter; (B) the brothers are sold to a perverted merchant who plans to keep the older boy for himself while giving the younger brother to a high official in the hopes of gaining favor; (C) the Horseclan warriors, who are searching for the children of their leader; (D) the people they make war on during their search; and (E) the other countries the Horseclan warriors attack, which are at war with each other.

Adams cleverly blends the battles between the warring countries with the smaller problems of the major characters. At first, the sheer weight of the number of central characters gives the book an appearance of cumbersome. Luckily, the characters are so sharply defined that Adams can leave one group for two or three chapters at a time without having their images fade from memory.

Beyond all of this, however, is the author's style which is the most appealing aspect of the series. Robert Adams is a fencer, hunter and rider in real life. He makes his own historically correct military costumes. A man known for precision, with a sharp eye for detail, he uses his personal wealth of knowledge to bring his books to life. His woodsmen are *real* woodsmen. They do more than just aim their bows and bring down game. They know how to skin the animals they kill; they know how to butcher them, and then make good use of the bones, horns, bladders and hides.

His merchants know how to haggle, trade, play opponents off one against the other, and so forth. His soldiers are real; his commanders attack using good, solid, inventive strategy. Basically, everyone in the world of the Horseclans knows who they are and what they are supposed to be doing. And, although some of Adams' characters are standard sword-play-novel figures, none of them are of the Lin Carter, one-dimensional variety.

*Horseclans Odyssey* is a welcome addition to the Adams series. The story line does not continue into the next volume, leaving the reader wondering what happens next. It does, however, entertain from beginning to end. Covering everything from high adventure to basic city-level politics, it is an honest, candid look at what people are like: scheming, greedy, cowardly, suspicious and lacking for the most part, but in some rare instances honest, honorable and stolid.





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# WHAT'S NEW?

WITH PHIL FOGGIO AND DIXIE NULL

HI FOLKS! THIS MONTH WE'RE HERE TO TALK ABOUT A NEW AND EXCITING ADDITION TO THE DUNGEONEER'S EQUIPMENT!

WE ARE? I THOT THIS MONTH WE WERE TALKING ABOUT "SEX IN D&D"

NO- THAT'S NEXT MONTH.

WELL, NOW YOU'VE GOT ME CURIOUS AS WELL. WHAT IS IT?

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE VIA THE USE OF SIMULATION.

SEEP? HERE WE ARE IN A REAL DUNGEON!

HEY! WE COULD GET HURT IN HERE!

HOW TRUE!

ESPECIALLY SINCE WE'RE ABOUT TO BE ATTACKED BY THIS GIANT, LEVEL 6, RAT MONSTER!!

SQUEEK!

YIKE!

NOW OBVIOUSLY WHATEVER IT IS THAT I HAVE HERE MUST BE PRETTY HOT STUFF...

SO USE IT!

RIGHT! AND HERE IT IS...

A CAT!

BUT... HOW?...

SIMPLE! MERELY THROW THE CAT AT THE RAT MONSTER

THEN RUN, WHILE THE MONSTER IS BUSY!

EEEK!  
MEEYOWWW  
RIP! CRACK!  
GHOMP YOW!

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# The Martian Chronicle

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### A LETTER TO THE BOSS MARTIAN

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## Martian Metals